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COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH AUTHORS.

VOL. CCCCXCVIII.

SAY AND SEAL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"If any man make religion as twelve, and the world as thirteen, such a one hath not the spirit of a true New England man."

HIGGINSON.

SAY AND SEAL.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "WIDE WIDE WORLD,"

AND

THE AUTHOR OF "DOLLARS AND CENTS."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1860.

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PREFACE.

It is a melancholy fact, that this book is somewhat larger than the mould into which most of the fluid fiction material is poured in this degenerate age. You perceive, good reader, that it has run over — in the last volume.

Doubtless the Procrustean critic would say, "Cut it off," — which point we waive.

The book is really of very moderate limits — considering that two women had to have their say in it.

It is pleasant to wear a glove when one shakes hands with the Public; therefore we still use our ancestors' names instead of our own, — but it is fair to state, that in this case there are a pair of gloves! — Which is the right glove, and which the left, the Public will never know.

A word to that "dear delightful" class of readers who believe everything that is written, and do not look at the number of the last page till they come to it — nor perhaps even then. Well they and the author know, that if the heroine cries — or laughs — too much, it is nobody's fault but her own! Gently

they quarrel with him for not permitting them to see every Jenny happily married and every Tom with settled good habits. Most lenient readers! — when you turn publishers, then will such books doubtless be written! Meantime, hear this.

In a shady, sunshiny town, lying within certain bounds — geographical or imaginary, — these events (really or in imagination) occurred. Precisely when, the chroniclers do not say. Scene opens with the breezes which June, and the coming of a new school teacher, naturally create. After the fashion of the place, his lodgings are arranged for him beforehand, by the School Committee. But where, or in what circumstances, the scene may close, — having told at the end of the book, we do not incline to tell at the beginning.

ELIZABETH WETHERELL.
AMY LOTHROP.

NEW YORK, *Feb. 1, 1860.*

SAY AND SEAL.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

The street was broad, with sidewalks, and wide grass-grown borders, and a spacious track of wheels and horses' feet in the centre. Great elms, which the early settlers planted, waved their pendant branches over the peaceful highway, and gave shelter and nest-room to numerous orioles, killdeer, and robins; putting off their yellow leaves in the autumn, and bearing their winter weight of snow, in seeming quiet assurance that spring would make amends for all. So slept the early settlers in the churchyard!

Along the street, at pleasant neighbourly intervals — not near enough to be crowded, nor far enough to be lonely — stood the houses, — comfortable, spacious, compact, — "with no nonsense about them." The Mong lay like a mere blue thread in the distance, its course often pointed out by the gaff of some little sloop that followed the bends of the river up toward Suckiaug. The low rolling shore was spotted with towns and spires: over all was spread the fairest blue sky and floating specks of white.

Not many sounds were astir, — the robins whistled, thief-like, over the cherry-trees; the killdeer, from some high twig, sent forth his sweet clear note; and now and then a pair of wheels rolled softly along the smooth road: the rush of the wind filled up the pauses. Anybody who was down by the Mong might have heard the soft roll of his blue waters, — any

one by the light-house might have heard the harsher dash of the salt waves.

I might go on, and say that if anybody had been looking out of Mrs. Derrick's window he or she might have seen — what Mrs. Derrick really saw! For she was looking out of the window (or rather through the blind) at the critical moment that afternoon. It would be too much to say that she placed herself there on purpose,—let the reader suppose what he likes.

At the time, then, that the village clock was striking four, when meditative cows were examining the length of their shadows, and all the geese were setting forth for their afternoon swim, a stranger opened Mrs. Derrick's little gate and walked in. Stretching out one hand to the dog in token of good fellowship, (a classical mind might have fancied him breaking the cake by whose help Quickear got past the lions,) he went up the walk, neither fast nor slow, ascended the steps, and gave what Mrs. Derrick called "considerable of a rap" at the door. That done, he faced about and looked at the far off blue Mong.

Not more intently did he eye and read that fair river; not more swiftly did his thoughts pass from the Mong to things beyond human ken; than Mrs. Derrick eyed and read — his back, and suffered her ideas to roam into the far off regions of speculation. The light summer coat, the straw hat, were nothing uncommon; but the silk umbrella was too good for the coat — the gloves and boots altogether extravagant!

"He ain't a bit like the Pattaquasset folks, Faith," she said, in a whisper thrown over her shoulder to her daughter.

"Mother —"

Mrs. Derrick replied by an inarticulate sound of interrogation.

"I wish you wouldn't stand just there. Do come away!"

"La, child," said Mrs. Derrick, moving back about half an inch, "he's looking off into space."

"But he'll be in. —"

"Not till somebody goes to the door," said Mrs. Derrick, "and there's not a living soul in the house but us two."

"Why didn't you say so before? Must I go, mother?"

"He didn't seem in a hurry," said her mother, — "and I wasn't. Yes, you can go if you like, child — and if you don't like, I'll go."

With a somewhat slower step than usual, with a slight hesitating touch of her hand to the smooth brown hair which lay over her temples, Miss Faith moved through the hall to the front door, gently opened it, and stood there, in the midst of the doorway, fronting the stranger. By no means an uncomely picture for the frame; for the face was good, the figure trim, and not only was the rich hair smooth, but a little white ruffle gave a dainty setting to the throat and chin which rose above it, both themselves rather on the dainty order.

I say fronting the stranger, — yet to speak truth the stranger was not fronting her. For having made one more loud appeal to the knocker, having taken off his hat, the better to feel the soft river breeze, he stood as before "looking off into space;" but with one hand resting more decidedly upon the silk umbrella.

Faith took a minute's view of decidedly pleasant outlines of shoulders and head — or what she thought such — glanced at the hand which grasped the umbrella handle, — and then lifting her own fingers to the knocker of the door, caused it gently to rise and fall.

A somewhat long breath escaped the stranger — as if the sound chimed in with his thoughts — nothing more.

Faith stood still and waited.

Perhaps that last sound of the knocker had by degrees asserted its claim to reality; perhaps impatience began to assert *its* claim; perhaps that long elm-tree shadow which was creeping softly on, even to his very feet, broke in upon the muser's vision. Certainly he turned with a very quick motion towards the door, and a gesture of the hand which said that *this* time the knocker should speak out. The door however

stood open, — the knocker beyond his reach; and Miss Faith so nearly within it, that he dropped his hand even quicker than he had raised it.

"I beg your pardon!" he said, with a grave inclination of the head. "I believe I knocked."

"Yes, sir — I thought you had forgotten," said Faith; not with perfect demureness, which she would like to have achieved. "Will you please to come in?" And somewhat regardless of consequences, leaving the hall door where it stood, Faith preceded her guest along the hall and again performed for him the office of door-opener at the parlour, ushering him thus into the presence of her mother.

Mrs. Derrick was seated in the rocking-chair, at the furthest corner from the window, and perfectly engrossed with the last monthly magazine. But she came out of them all with wonderful ease and promptness, shook hands very cordially with the new comer, seated him in her corner and chair before he could make much resistance, and would also have plunged him into the magazine — but there he was firm.

"If you would only make yourself comfortable while I see where your baggage is!" said the good lady.

"But I can tell you where it is, ma'am," said he looking up at her, — "it is at the station, and will be here in half an hour."

"Well when did you have dinner?" said Mrs. Derrick, resolved upon doing something.

"Yesterday," was his quiet reply. "To-day I have been in the cars."

"O my! my!" said Mrs. Derrick, — "then of course we'll have tea at once. Faith!"

"I'm here, mother. I'll go and see to it, right away."

But in some mysterious manner the stranger reached the doorway before either of the ladies.

"Mrs. Derrick — Miss Faith — I told you that I had had no dinner, and that was true. It is also true that I am in not the least hurry for tea. Please do not have it until your usual time." And he walked back to his seat.

But after the slightest possible pause of hesitancy, Faith had disappeared. Her mother followed her.

"Child," she said, "what on earth is his name?"

"Mother! — how should I know? I didn't ask him."

"But the thing is," said Mrs. Derrick, "I *did* know, — the Committee told me all about it. And of course he thinks I know, and I don't — no more than I do my great-grandmother's name, which I never did remember yet."

"Mother — shall I go and ask him? — or wait till after supper?"

"O you shan't go," said her mother. "Wait till after supper and we'll send Cindy. He won't care about his name till he gets his tea, I'll warrant. But what made you so long getting the door open, child? Does it stick?"

"Why," said Faith, baring her arms and entering upon sundry quick movements about the room, "it *was* open and he didn't know it."

"Didn't know it!" said Mrs. Derrick, — "my! I hope he ain't short-sighted. Now Faith, I'm not going to have you burn your face for all the school teachers in Connecticut. Keep away, child, — I'll put on the kettle myself. Cindy must have found her beau again—it's as tiresome as tiresome can be."

"It's just as well, mother; I'd rather do it myself. Now you go in and find what his name is, and I'll have everything together directly. The oven's hot now."

"I'll go in presently," said Mrs. Derrick; "but as to asking him what his name is — la, child, I'd just as soon ask him where he came from." And in deep thought on the subject, Mrs. Derrick stepped briskly about the kitchen.

"Faith," she said, "where shall I ask him to sit?"

"Will you pour out tea — or shall I, mother?"

"What's that to do?"

"Why I was thinking — but it don't matter where you put him. There's four sides to the table."

"Don't talk of my putting him anywhere, child — I'm as afraid of him as can be." And Mrs. Derrick went back to see how time went with her guest.

It went fast or slow, I suppose, after all, somewhat according to the state of his appetite. One hour and ten minutes certainly had slipped away — if he was hungry he knew that another ten minutes was following in train — when at length the parlour door opened again and Faith stood there, with a white apron on and cheeks a good deal heightened in colour since the date of their last appearance.

"Mother, tea's ready. Cindy hasn't got back." And having made this gentle announcement, Faith disappeared again, leaving it to her mother to shew the way to the supper-room.

This was back of the parlour and communicated with the kitchen, from which Faith came in as they entered, bearing a plate of white biscuits, smoking hot, in her hand. The floor was painted with thick yellow paint, smooth and shining; plenty of windows let in plenty of light and the sweet evening air; the table stood covered with a clean brownish table-cloth, — but what a supper covered that! Rosy slices of boiled ham, snowy rounds of 'milk emptyings', bread, strawberries, pot-cheeses, pickles, fried potatoes, and Faith's white cakes, with tea and coffee!

Now as Faith had laid the clean napkin for the stranger at the foot of the table, opposite her mother, it cannot be thought presumption in him that he at once took his seat there; thus relieving Mrs. Derrick's mind of an immense responsibility. Yet something in his manner then made her pause and look at him, though she did not expect to see him bow his head and ask for a blessing on the meal before them. If that was presumption, neither of his hearers felt it so, — the little flush on the mother's cheek told rather of emotion, of some old memory now quickened into life. Her voice even trembled a little as she said, —

"Will you have tea or coffee, sir?"

And Faith offered her biscuit.

"Or there's bread, if you like it better, sir."

"The biscuits are best," said her mother, — "Faith's biscuits are always good."

And he took a biscuit, while a very slight unbending of the lines of his face said that the excellence of faith's handiwork was at least not always so apparent.

"Miss Faith, what shall I give you in return that is beyond your reach and (comparatively) within mine?"

Possibly — possibly, the slight grave opening of two rather dark eyes confessed that in her apprehension the store thus designated, from which he might give her, was very large indeed. But if that was so, her lips came short of the truth, for she answered, —

"I don't want anything, thank you."

"Not even butter?" — with his hand on the knife.

Faith seemed inclined not to want butter, but finally submitted and held out her plate. Whereupon, having helped her and himself, the stranger diverged a little, with the rather startling question,

"What sort of a Flora have you in this neighbourhood?"

"There isn't any mother?" said Faith, with a doubtful appeal towards the tea-tray. —

A pleasant look fell upon her while her look went away — a look which said he would like to tell her all about the matter, then and there; but merely taking another of the white biscuits, he went on to ask whether the roads were good and the views fine.

"The roads are first-rate," said Mrs. Derrick. "I don't know much of views myself, but Faith thinks they're wonderful."

"I don't suppose they are *wonderful*," said Faith; "but it is pretty up the Mong, and I am sure, mother, it's pretty down on the shore towards the sunsetting."

"And how is it towards the sunrising?"

"I never saw it — we never go down there then," Faith said, with a very frank smile.

"Faith always stays by me," said Mrs. Derrick; "if I can't go, she won't. And of course I never can at that time of day. It's quite a way down to the shore."

"What shore?"

"It's the sea-shore — that is, not the real sea-shore — it's only the Sound," said Faith; "but there is the salt-water, and it is as good as the sea."

"How far off?" said the stranger, bestowing upon Faith a saucer of strawberries.

Faith would have asked him to help himself, but taking notice mentally that he was extremely likely to do so, she contented herself with replying, "It's about two miles."

"And what are some of the 'good' things there?"

"Perhaps you wouldn't think it much," said Faith modestly; — "but the water is pretty, and I like to see the ships and vessels on it going up and down; and the points of the shore and the wet stones look such beautiful colours when the sun is near set."

"I like stones — whether wet or dry," said her questioner.

"Most people here don't like them," said Faith. "But there are plenty down by the sea-shore. — And plenty on the farm too," she added.

"Ah, people like and dislike things for very different reasons, Miss Faith," he answered; "so perhaps your neighbours and I are not so far apart in our opinions as you may think. Only I believe, that while there is 'a time to cast away stones,' there is also 'a time to gather stones together' — and therein perhaps they would not agree with me."

Faith looked up, and her lips parted — and if the thought had been spoken which parted them, it would probably have been a confession that she did not understand, or a request for more light. But if her face did not say it for her she did not say it for herself.

If anybody could have seen Mrs. Derrick's face while these little sentences went back and forth, he would have acknowledged it was worth the sight. Her awe and admiration of every word uttered by the stranger — the intense interest with which she waited for every word spoken by Faith — the

slight look of anxiety changing to one of perfect satisfaction, — was pretty to see.

"Faith," she said when tea was over, and her guest had walked to the front door to take another look at 'space,' "Faith, don't you think he liked his supper?"

"I should think he would — after having no dinner," said Faith.

"But it was such a mercy, child, that you hadn't gone out to supper anywhere — I can't think what I should have done. There's Cindy this minute! — run and tell her to go right away and find out what his name is — tell her *I* want to know, — you can put it in good words."

"Mother! — I'd rather ask him myself."

But that did not suit Mrs. Derrick's ideas of propriety. And stepping out into the kitchen she despatched Cindy on her errand. Cindy presently came back from the front door, and went into the dining-room, but not finding Mrs. Derrick she handed a card to Faith.

"It's easy done," said Cindy. "I just asked him if he'd any objections towards tellin' his name — and he kinder opened his eyes at me and said no. Then I said, says I, Mis' Derrick do' know, and she'd like ter. 'Miss Derrick!' says he — and he took out his pencil and writ that. But I'd like to know *what* he cleans his pencil with," said Cindy in conclusion, "for I'm free to confess I never see brass shine so in my born days."

Faith took the card and read, —

JOHN ENDECOTT LINDEN.

She looked a little curiously at the pencilling, at the formation of the capitals and of the small letters; then laid it down and gave her attention to the dishes of the supper-table.

CHAPTER II.

The next day was Saturday. The morning opened with grey clouds, covering the sky, but which were light and light-broken and promised to roll away entirely as soon as the sun should reach a commanding position in the heavens. The sun however was still quite distant from such a position, in fact was not much more than an hour high, when Lucinda, who was sweeping the front door steps, was hailed from the front door by a person not one of the party of the preceding evening, and very unlike either of them. It was a lady, not young, of somewhat small figure, trim, and nicely dressed. Indeed she was rather handsomely dressed and in somewhat French taste; she had showy gold earrings in her ears, and a head much more in the mode than either Mrs. Derrick's or her daughter's. The face of this lady was plain, decidedly; but redeemed by a look of sense and shrewdness altogether unmixed with ill nature. The voice spoke alert and pleasantly.

"So Lucindy, you had company last night, didn't you?"

"May be we did and may be we didn't," said Lucindy, brushing away with great energy at an imaginary bit of lint at the end of the upper step. "I do' know but we'd just as good call him one of the family."

"So much at home already? I missed seeing him last night — I couldn't get home. What's he like, Cindy? and what has he done?"

"Done?" said Cindy — "well he's went out a'most afore I was up. And as to like, Miss Dilly — just you look at him when he comes in. He looks some like folks, and yet he don't, either."

"He's out, is he?"

"Yes," said Cindy, reducing a large family of spiders to temporary starvation and despair, — "he's out — if he ain't gone in nowheres. Miss Dilly, if you'll stand just inside the door I can wash the steps just as well.

"What's the gentleman out so early for? Maybe he's missed some of his luggage, Cindy."

"Hope he ha'n't got no more — without its lighter," said Cindy. "However, he carried it upstairs himself, I'm free to confess. I guess 'twarn't for luggage he went out, 'cause he asked about breakfast time, special."

"If he means to be out till then he'll have a good walk of it."

It wanted five minutes of breakfast time, and Mrs. Derrick — what with stepping into the kitchen to oversee Cindy, and stepping to the front window to oversee the street — was warm enough for a cooler morning.

"Faith," she said, referring as usual to her daughter, "Faith — what shall we do if he don't come?"

"I guess he'll come, mother; — he knows the time. The things won't hurt much by waiting a little."

As she spoke, the little front gate swung softly to, and the person in question came leisurely up the steps and into the hall. Then having just glanced into the parlour, he at once — with a promptitude which bespoke him too punctual himself to doubt the punctuality of others — advanced to the dining-room door and walked in.

Mrs. Derrick's face shewed gratification mingled with her good nature. Faith smiled; and Miss Dilly was duly introduced as Miss Delia Danforth, Mrs. Derrick's aunt, then on a visit at Pattaquasset.

"You've taken an early stroll this morning, sir," said this last lady. "View the country?"

"No," said Mr. Linden, "I have been viewing the town."

"Ah! Well I call that viewing the country. Town and country, all's one here; and it makes a very pleasant sort of place. But what do you call the *town*, sir? — Do you drink coffee?"

"The town," said Mr. Linden, in answer to the first question — receiving his coffee-cup from Mrs. Derrick by way of answer to the second, — "means in this instance, Miss Danforth, that spot of country which is most thickly settled. Yes, ma'am — I drink coffee."

"Very bad for you, sir; don't you know it?"

"Bad for me as one of the human race? or as an individual specially marked out not to drink it?"

"Dear me!" said Miss Danforth sipping her own tea — "I don't know what you are 'marked out' for. I think it's a mistake for everybody to think he is 'marked' for something special — they set the mark themselves, and generally it don't fit."

"But the fact that a man often gets the wrong mark, by no means proves that there is no right one which belongs to him," said Mr. Linden, looking gravely at Faith as if he meant she should smile.

Faith seemed to look at the question however rather seriously, for dropping her knife and fork she asked,

"How shall a man know his mark?"

"By earnest consideration and prayer," he answered, really grave this time. "I know of no other way, Miss Faith."

What a remark that was! it silenced the whole table. Knives and forks and spoons had it alone, with only words of necessity; till Faith asked Mr. Linden if he would not have another cup of coffee.

"Certainly!" he said handing her his cup. "There is so much to be said on both sides of that little bit of china — I must not be partial in my attention."

"But you can't study both sides of a subject at once," said the coffee-hater.

"Then take them alternately — and (figuratively) walk round your coffee-cup, surveying its fair proportions from different points of view. If the coffee is strong and you are nervous — that's one thing. Again, if the coffee be weak and you be phlegmatic — that's another."

"The coffee's not strong to-day," said Mrs. Derrick with a regretful shake of the head.

"Nor am I phlegmatic," — with the slightest possible indication of a smile.

"Do you think," said Miss Danforth, "a man is better

able to decide questions of common judgment for having studied a great deal? — learned a great many things, I mean."

That depends very much upon what effect his studies have had upon his judgment. Mrs. Derrick — are you trying to break me off from coffee by degrees? this cup has no sugar in it."

"O my!" said Mrs. Derrick, colouring up in the greatest confusion. "I do beg your pardon, sir! Faith, take the sugar-bowl, child, and pick out some large lumps."

"You will get more praise from Miss Danforth than blame from me, ma'am," said Mr. Linden, submitting his cup to Faith's amendment and watching the operation.

"*I* don't know," said Miss Danforth goodhumouredly. "Maybe he can stand it. — If he takes two cups I should say he can. How do you like the profession of teaching, sir?"

Now to say truth, Mr. Linden did not know — not by actual practice, but it was also a truth which he did not feel bound to disclose. He therefore stirred his coffee with a good deal of deliberation, and even tasted it, before he replied,

"What would you say to me, Miss Danforth, if I professed to be fond of teaching some people some things? Miss Faith, that last lump of sugar was potent."

"What sort of people, and what sort of things, for instance?" said the lady.

"The things I know best, and the people who think they know least — for instance," he replied.

"I should say you know definitions," was Miss Danforth's again goodhumoured rejoinder.

"What did you say was the matter with the sugar, sir?" said Faith.

"I said it was potent, Miss Faith, — or I might have said, powerful. But indeed it was not the sugar's fault — the difficulty was, there was not enough coffee to counterbalance it."

"I put in too much!" said Faith, making a regretful translation of this polite speech.

"Yes" — said Mr. Linden with great solemnity as he set down the empty cup, — "but too much sugar is at least not a common misfortune. With what appreciation I shall look back to this, some day when I have not enough! What did you think of the sunrise this morning?"

"Do you mean, because the sky was covered with clouds?" said Faith. "But there was enough — the sun looked through; and the colours were beautiful. Did you see them?"

"I wonder when *you* did, child!" said Miss Danforth; — "up to your elbows in butter!"

"Yes, I saw them. Then you are true to your name, Miss Faith, and find 'enough' in a cloudy sky? — Pray, Miss Danforth, what depth of butter does a churning yield in this region?"

"I guess," said Miss Danforth laughing, "*you* never saw much of farmer's work — did you?"

"Is butter-making farmer's work?" said Mr. Linden with a face of grave inquiry.

"Here's the trustys" — said Cindy opening the door; "at least that's what they said they be, but I'm free to confess 'tain't nobody but Squire Deacon and Parson Somers."

"Do they want me?" said Mr. Linden looking round.

"I guess likely" — said Cindy. "The Squire does come here to see Miss Faith, but I guess 'tain't her he wants this time."

And Cindy vanished.

"What do the trustees want?" said Miss Danforth.

"Upon the testimony of Cinderella, they want me," said Mr. Linden. "Miss Faith, may I have a glass of water? — What they want to do with me, Miss Danforth, is a little uncertain."

"Well," said Miss Danforth, "I think you'll be able to prevent them!"

He rose to take the glass from Faith's hand, and then

merely inquiring whether the ladies were coming to second him, left the room.

Parson Somers was a young-looking, good-looking, affable gentleman, who pressed the ladies' hands very cordially and was very happy to see them. Squire Deacon was younger, and likewise good looking, but affability he had never been charged with. Over the handsome cut of face, the strong well-built figure, he wore a manner as rough as a bear's great-coat; only at some times and for some people the roughness was brushed down. It never would stay, any more than the various elegant phrases with which Squire Deacon sometimes seasoned his speech, would take root there and spread.

"Quite an agreeable variation," said Mr. Somers, — "ha — in such a place as Pattaquasset — to have a new arrival among us. Mr. Linden — I hope you will like our little town. You have a pleasant experience of us to begin with."

"Yes but, Parson, don't make him think we're all like some," said Squire Deacon, — and as he turned towards Faith the beaming of his face seemed almost reflected in his brass buttons. "Dreadful gloomy morning, Miss Faith!"

"Mr. Linden has probably seen too much of the world," said Mr. Somers, — "not to know that — ha! — too great a preponderance of good is not to be looked for."

"May as well look for as much as you can find," said Miss Danforth. "A good deal's lost by not looking for it."

"Ah," said the Squire, with another glance at Faith, "it's not so hard to find things, neither, Miss Danforth. You remember Sinbad the sailor lookin' down into the vale of diamonds?"

"Don't remember him a bit. What did he see there?"

"Nothin' *but* diamond jewelry," said Squire Deacon in a sentimental tone. "Miss Faith, you doubtless recollect the tale?"

"I hope," said Mr. Somers, — "ha! — friend Deacon — you don't mean that Mr. Linden should look for a valley of diamonds in Pattaquasset?"

"Whereabouts does the valley lie, sir?" said Mr. Linden.

But the Squire, as if a new idea had struck him, replied somewhat brusquely.

"It don't lie nowheres, sir, nowheres but in fancy's field."

"I suppose," said Mr. Somers smiling blandly, "Mr. Linden's peculiar course of business don't lead him much into that field."

"You can strike into it 'most anywhere," said Miss Danforth. "Mr. Linden's an early man — he'll find the valley of diamonds, if it's in the town."

"Miss Faith told me there were stones enough here," he said, "but she did not hint that any of them were precious."

"We shall expect," said Mr. Somers, "to see some of our stones — I mean, some of our hard heads and thick heads — grow precious, or — a — improve! — under Mr. Linden's management."

"Pray sir," said Squire Deacon, suddenly recollecting that he was a 'trusty,' "what do you consider the best plan for the instruction of youth? what is your method?"

Mr. Linden looked contemplatively out of the window.

"I think sir, if the boys are very rough I should first teach them manners. If they are smoother boys, I should teach them spelling, — if they have already learned spelling, I should let them read."

The Squire bowed.

"Quite satisfactory, sir. Mr. Somers — I think perhaps Mr. Linden would like to visit our little temple of litteratur."

"I should be very gratified to accompany Mr. Linden in viewing so much of Pattaquasset. I trust, Mr. Linden, that the highest — ha — the moral and religious teaching, of the youth here, will not be quite overlooked in your system."

The reply that first rose to Mr. Linden's lips came not forth. He checked himself — rather perhaps in deference to the subject than anything else, and simply answered,

"I trust not, sir."

And with many low bows from the Squire, the two gentlemen went into the hall, Mr. Linden following. But he came back the next moment to ask the dinner hour.

"We are as apt to have it at noon as any time," said Faith. "Will that do, Mr. Linden? we could have it later."

"That will do perfectly. Only if the 'temple of literature' opens and swallows me up, Miss Faith, don't wait — that's all."

And with a smile that was a strong contrast to the face he had bestowed upon the trustees, he went after them.

CHAPTER III.

Monday morning came, with its hands full of work. They were willing hands that were outstretched to receive the load, — strong hands too, and skilful; but it may be, better suited to other work. Certainly as the days passed Endecott's gravity took a deeper tinge, and his words became fewer. Still maintaining his morning walk, and a like tasting of the air at night, — ever punctual at meals, and when there displaying an unruffled equanimity and cheerfulness, — the even tones of his voice shewed sometimes a little weariness, and his step grew more thoughtful. And so the week rolled on, and the afternoon sun of Friday began to near the horizon.

It was a warm afternoon, soft and balmy; a little haze on the sky, the least veil upon the Mong's further shore; the summer roses hanging their heads, heavy with sleep and sweetness. The honeysuckles on the porch grew sweeter and sweeter as the sun went down, and the humming-birds dipped into those long flagons, or poised themselves in mid-air for a survey.

In the porch sat the three ladies. Each had been busy, and now each laid down her work, obedient to unseen influences. The warm breeze was softly rubbing Faith's cheek with its rouging fingers, and her mother gazed — nor could give one look to humming-birds or roses.

Her thoughts however, took greater range — or the low chiming of the village clock sent them off; for she presently said,

"Faith, my dear, what have we got for tea?" — that meal being under Faith's special superintendence.

"Very good blackberries, mother, and beautiful raspberries; and I cut my cream-cheese; and Cindy is ready to bake the bannocks. Butter's as sweet as it can be, this churning. Will that do? — Mr. Linden likes raspberries and cream," she added a little lower.

Mrs. Derrick gave a comprehensive "Yes, child," to both part's of Faith's reply, and then stopped and looked away up the street. For down the street at that moment came Mr. Linden, walking leisurely, his head bent towards one of his older scholars who had both hands clasped round his arm. The boy's upraised eager face shewed even at a distance how earnestly he was talking.

"There he comes!" said Miss Danforth.

"Who is that with him?" said Faith.

"Reuben Taylor, child," her mother answered.

Then as they came near the gate, and stopped and shook hands, Reuben cried out (in answer to words which they did not hear)

"Let *me* go! do, please, Mr. Linden!" — and went; while his teacher opened the gate, picked one of the drooping roses, came up the steps and taking off his hat bowed to the assembled ladies.

"Well, Mr. Linden," said Miss Danforth, "how do you find the Pattaquasset diamonds?"

"I find, madam, that they shine — as is the custom of diamonds."

"Are you going to let Reuben Taylor go?"

"Whither?" said Mr. Linden.

"Why, where he asked you. Is *he* one of Mr. Somers' precious stones?"

"He has gone," was the smiling reply. "Precious? — yes, — everybody is precious in one sense."

"You haven't been to college for nothing," said Miss Danforth, who would talk about anything. "I should like you to find out in what sense *I* am precious. I've a good many

friends — but there isn't one of 'em that wouldn't eat and drink just as well with me out of the world as in it."

He smiled a little — though rather soberly, and stood watching the changing colours of clouds and sky for a minute or two without speaking. Then, half to himself as it were, low but very distinctly, he repeated —

"'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels.'"

The answer to this was only in pantomime, but striking. Miss Danforth did not speak, and instead thereof turned her head over her shoulder and looked away steadily over the meadows which stretched north of the house into the distance. Faith's eyes fell to the floor and the lids drooped over them; and as plain a veil of shadow fell upon her face. Mrs. Derrick's eyes went from one to the other with a look which was not unwonted with her, and a little sigh which said she thought everybody was good but herself.

"Bain't ye never comin' in to supper?" said Cindy, framing herself in the doorway. "I want to get out after supper, Miss Faith," she said dropping her voice, — "I do, real bad."

"Is all ready, Cindy?"

"Yes marm," said Cindy. "I'm free to confess there's a pile o' cakes baked."

"Miss Faith, when do you mean to shew me the shore?" said Mr. Linden turning round.

"You have been so busy all the week," said Faith, — "and then you didn't speak of it, Mr. Linden — I can go any time."

"My dear," said Mrs. Derrick, "there comes Squire Deacon. Maybe he'll stay to supper. I'll go and put on another cup."

Mr. Linden gave one glance at the opening gate, and followed Mrs. Derrick into the house.

"Miss Faith," said the Squire, "do you think the night dews conducive to — to your comfort?"

"When they are falling," said Faith abstractedly. "Why not, Mr. Deacon?"

"To be sure!" said the Squire gallantly, — "honeysuckles

and such things do. But what I mean is this. Cilly's goin' to get up a great shore party to-morrow, and she says she couldn't touch a mouthful down there if you didn't go. And like enough some other folks couldn't neither."

"Mother's gone in to tea. Will you come in and ask her, Squire?"

"Couldn't stay, Miss Faith — Cilly's lookin' out for me now. But you can tell — your mother 'll go if you do, — or you can go if she don't, you and Miss Danforth. It's good for you now, Miss Faith, — the saline breezes are so very — different," said the Squire.

"When are you going, Mr. Deacon?"

"Soon as we can tackle up after dinner, Cilly thought. But fix your own time, Miss Faith — I'll call for you any hour of the twenty-six."

Faith hesitated, and pulled a leaf or two from the honeysuckle; then she spoke boldly.

"But you forget we have a gentleman here, Squire; — we can't go without Mr. Linden."

"I don't want his help to drive my horse," said the Squire, with a little change of tone, — "but whoever hinders his going, *I* don't. The shore's wide, Miss Faith, — it don't matter how many gets onto it. There's no chance but he'll go if you ask him. Who wouldn't!" said the Squire, relapsing into his former self.

"We'll come down then some time in the course of the afternoon," said Faith, "and see what you are doing."

"Then I sha'n't drive you down, sha'n't I?" said Squire Deacon. "Never mind — it's no matter, — come when you like, Miss Faith, we'll be glad to see you, anyhow." And the Squire closed the little gate after him energetically.

"Cinderella is in despair, Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden as Faith entered the dining-room. "Miss Danforth — how could you keep Squire Deacon so long, and then send him home to supper!"

"It's all your fault, sir," said Miss Danforth cheerfully, "And I guess the Squire has got his supper."

"He must be a man of quick despatch," said Mr. Linden; while Faith after a glance to see if her bannocks were right, made her announcement.

"Mother, there's a shore party to-morrow."

"Who's going, child?"

"Squire Deacon and Cecilia — and I don't know who else — and he came to ask us. Will you go and take tea with us at the shore, Mr. Linden?"

"Does that mean that my tea is to be transported to the shore, and that I am to go there to find it, Miss Faith?"

"You have a very puzzling way of putting things," said Faith laughing, though her look bore out her words. "I don't think it means that. *Your* tea won't be there before you are, Mr. Linden. Wouldn't you like to go?"

"The Squire says there is room enough on the shore," suggested Miss Danforth. "I suppose he wants a good deal for himself, or he wouldn't have thought of it."

"Perhaps he thinks I want a good deal," said Mr. Linden. "Well — in consideration of the width of the shore, I think I will go. Is not that your advice, Miss Faith? What are the pros and cons, — if you were to state them fairly?"

"Well," said Faith, "you will have a pleasant ride, or walk, down — whichever you like; — *I* think it is very pleasant. You can go in the water, if you like, which everybody does; there's a beautiful shore; and I suppose that would be pleasant. You'll see all that is pretty about the place while the people are digging clams and preparing supper; and then you'll have supper; and then we shall come home; and I think it is all pleasant, except that there will be too many people. I like it best with just a few."

"As if we were to go down there to-night in the moonlight. — Now Miss Faith — what is the other side?"

"Just that — the too many people. There isn't a chance to enjoy anything quietly. I can enjoy the people too, sometimes, but not the other things at the same time so well. Perhaps you can, Mr. Linden."

"I can sometimes enjoy the other things at the same time — better."

Faith again looked a little puzzled, but answered with a simple

"Then I dare say you will like it."

"What I am puzzled about," said he smiling, "is, how you are to shew me the shore. Miss Danforth — why is that bread-plate so attractive to me, while I am like the reverse end of the magnet to it?"

"But my dear," said Mrs. Derrick, for the bread-plate was suggestive, — "ain't you going along with the Squire's party?"

"I said we would come after, mother."

"The Squire only said there was room on the shore," added Miss Danforth.

"Is the shore wide enough for us to drive down there? or must we walk?" asked Mr. Linden.

"But you'll eat supper with them, of course," said Mrs. Derrick.

"Of course, mother. The wagon must go, Mr. Linden. There's room enough for anything."

Mr. Linden made no comment upon that, and finished his tea in comparative silence. Then went forth, as was his custom, to the post-office, and — as was not his custom — returned very soon. Mrs. Derrick and Miss Danforth had gone out to see a neighbour, and Faith sat alone in the twilight parlour. It was very twilight there, but he walked in and stood waiting for his eyes to discover what there might be.

"There is nobody here but me, Mr. Linden," said a very soft and clear voice. "Do you want anything?"

"I wanted to see you — and am foiled by the darkness. Are you tired, Miss Faith?"

"Never. I wasn't sitting in the dark for that."

"Would you object to coming into the light?"

"Not at all," said Faith laughing. "Which way?"

"There is to be a fine illumination to-night, which I should like to have you see."

"An illumination! Where is it? Shall I want my bonnet?"

"You will be better illuminated without it, — but you may perhaps take cold."

"How do you make your scholars understand you?" said Faith. "I am sure I must need illuminating. — So much, that I had better leave my bonnet, Mr. Linden?"

"I think you may — if you will take some light substitute. Why my scholars *are* my scholars, Miss Faith."

"What then?" said Faith stopping short.

"Why then I am their teacher."

"I half wish I was a scholar too," said Faith with a tone which filled up the other 'half' — "I don't know much, Mr. Linden."

"About illuminations? I will promise you some light upon that point."

With which encouragement, Faith fetched the scarf which was to do duty for a bonnet if desired, and they set out.

"Now Miss Faith," said her companion as he closed the gate, "if you will shew me the road, I will shew you the shore. — Which will not at all interfere with your shewing it to me to-morrow."

"The shore!" said Faith. "To-night? Are you in earnest?"

"Very much in earnest. You prefer some other road?"

"No indeed — it's beautiful, and I like it very much. Cindy," she said to that damsel whom they opportunely passed at the entrance of the lane — "you tell my mother I am gone to take a walk." And so they passed on.

The way was down a lane breaking from the high road of the village, just by Mrs. Derrick's house. It was a quiet country lane; passing between fields of grass or grain, with few trees near at hand. Here and there a house, small and unnotable like the trees. Over all the country the moon, near full though not high, threw a gentle light; revealing to the fancy a less picturesque landscape than the sun would have

shewn; for there were no strong lines or points to be made more striking by her partial touches, and its greatest beauty lay in the details which she could not light up. The soft and rich colours of grain and grass, the waving tints of broken ground and hillside, were lost now; the flowers in the hedges had shrunk into obscurity; the thrifty and well-to-do order of every field and haystack, could hardly be noted even by one who knew it was there. Only the white soft glimmer on a wide pleasant land; the faint lighting of one side of trees and fences, the broader salutation to a house-front, and the deeper shadow which sometimes told of a piece of woodland or a slight hilly elevation.

Then all that was passed; and the road descended a little steep to where it crossed, by a wooden bridge, a small stream or bed of a creek. Here the moon, now getting up in the sky, did greater execution; the little winding piece of water glittered in silver patches, and its sedgy borders were softly touched out; with the darker outlines of two or three fishing-boats.

And so on, towards the shore. Now the salt smell met and mingled with the perfume of woods and flowers, and the road grew more and more sandy. But still the fields waved with Indian-corn, were sweet with hay, or furrowed with potatoes. Then the outlines of sundry frame bathing-houses appeared in the distance, and near them the road came to an end.

The shore was improved by the moonlight, — its great rocks, slippery with sea-weed, glittered with a wet sheen. The Sound wore its diamonds royally, and each tiny wave broke in a jewelled light upon the sand. Far in the distance the dim shore of Long Island lay like a black line upon the water; and sloops and schooners sailed softly on their course, or tacked across the rippling waves, a fleet of "Black spirits and white."

"What do you think of the illumination, Miss Faith?" said her companion, when they had sat still for five minutes.

"What do *you* think of it, I think I should say. Mr. Linden, I have shewed you the shore!"

"You!" —

"Who else?"

"Were you ever here before by moonlight?"

"I don't know — No, I think not. Were you ever here before at all?"

"Is it owing to you that I am here now?"

"You couldn't have got here without me," said Faith, stooping to turn over some of the glittering pebbles at her feet; — "and I couldn't have got here without you. I am willing to allow that we are square, Mr. Linden. I must! — for you will turn a corner faster than I can catch you."

"If you really suppose that first proposition to be true," said Mr. Linden raising his eyebrows, "why of course there is no more to be said. Miss Faith, how would you like to be sailing about in one of those phantom ships?"

"I should like it very well," said Faith, "in a good time, I went to Pequot in one once. It was very pleasant. Why do you call them phantoms?"

"Look at that one standing off across the moonlight towards the other shore, — gliding along so silently with her black sails all set, — does she look real? — You cannot even hear the creaking of a rope."

Faith looked, and drew an interrupted deep breath. She had lived in a world of realities. Perhaps this was the first 'phantom' that had ever suggested itself — or been suggested — to her imagination. Possibly something of the same thought crossed her mind; for she drew her breath again a little short as she spoke.

"Yes! — it's beautiful! — But I live in such a different world, Mr. Linden, — I never thought of such a thing before."

He smiled — pleasantly and thoughtfully. "How came you to see the sunrise colours the other day, Miss Faith?"

"O I see them always. And that puts me in mind of some-

thing I have been wanting to say to you every day all the week! and I could never find a chance. You asked me that morning, Mr. Linden, if I was *true to my name*, *finding enough in a cloudy sky*. What did you mean? What did you mean by being 'true to my name'?"

"I shall have to use your name a little freely, to tell you," he said. "It is faith's privilege to be independent of circumstances. Faith always finds something wherein to rejoice. If the sky be clear,

'Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near.'

If cloudy, faith uses her glass as a prism, and in one little ray of light finds all the colours of the rainbow."

"I don't know what a prism is," said Faith somewhat sadly.

"A prism, in strictness, is a piece of glass cut in a particular way, so that the colourless sunbeams which pass through it are divided into their many-coloured members. But other things act as prisms, — the rain-drops in a shower — the lustres upon your church chandelier. You have seen the colours there?"

"Well, how do they do that?"

"I must take some other time to tell you, — it would be too long a matter to-night. And I doubt whether you ought to sit here any longer."

"But *this* Faith don't do as you say," she said, as she slowly and rather unwillingly rose from her seat. "And I don't understand how any faith can."

"This Faith must study the Bible then, and do what *that* says." The tone was encouraging though the voice was grave.

He was not answered; and the homeward walk was begun. But Faith stopped and turned again to look before she had gone three paces,

"I am in no hurry," Mr. Linden said, — "take your own time — only do not take cold."

Faith turned away silently again, and began trudging along the sandy road which led back to the lane. The moonlight shewed the way better now. Passing on, as they neared home one house after another shewed its glimmer of light and gave forth its cheerful sound of voices. From one, however, the sound was *not* cheerful. It was Squire Deacon's.

"Well, you'll see to-morrow, Cilly — if the sky don't fall, — you'll see. Folks thinks the water down to the shore's mighty deep — 'way over their heads — till they've made its acquaintance; and then they find out they can wade round in it 'most anywheres." —

"What's the matter with the Squire?" said Faith with a slight laugh, as these strange statements reached her ears.

"I should think — to use his own phraseology — he must be 'over his head' somewhere," replied Mr. Linden.

Whereat Faith's laugh deepened, but the low sweet tone of it only sounded an instant.

"My dear!" said Mrs. Derrick, running out as they entered the gate, "ain't you very imprudent? Wasn't she very imprudent, Mr. Linden?"

"Very prudent, ma'am, for she wore a shawl."

"And didn't want that, mother," said Faith.

CHAPTER IV.

The illumination lasted through the night — until

> "Night's candles were burnt out, and jocund day
> Stood tip-toe on the misty mountain tops."

Very jocund she looked, with her light pink veils wreathing about the horizon, and the dancing white clouds which hurried up as the sun rose, driven by a fresh wind. Mr. Linden declared, when he came in to breakfast, that the day promised to equal the preceding night.

"And whoever wants more," he added, "must wait; for I think it will not surpass it."

With which, Mr. Linden stirred his coffee, and told Miss

Danforth with a little look of defiance, "it was particularly good — she had better try a cup."

Miss Danforth instituted a fierce inquiry as to the direction of the preceding evening's walk; to which Faith gave an unsatisfactory answer.

"Did you ever look at coffee in connexion with the fatigues of life?" pursued Mr. Linden.

"I shall, probably, in future," said Miss Danforth. "Now Mr. Linden, I ask you; you're a nice man to give a straight answer; — where did you and Faith go?"

"I am glad I am a nice man," said Mr. Linden, "but I can scarce give a straight answer to that question."

"Why not, for pity's sake?"

"It must needs travel a crooked road."

"Did you?"

"It has left a meandering sort of recollection in my mind."

"Where did it lead to?"

"It led to another."

"What I want to know is," said Miss Danforth, "where did you find yourselves when you were furthest from home."

"Let me shew you," said he. "Suppose your plate to be a rock, and this tumbler of radishes a tree, and the table-cloth grass, — the moon over your head, crickets under your feet. Miss Faith walks round the rock, I follow her, — and we both follow the road. On the way, the still night air is enlivened with owls, grasshoppers, family secrets. Our attention is thus devided between the moon and sublunary affairs. Miss Faith — what shall I give you?"

Miss Danforth's curiosity seemed for once willing to be satisfied with fun; and Faith's hunger was in the same predicament.

"But child," said Mrs. Derrick, who had bent her attention upon the diagram at the other end of the table, "I don't recollect any such place!"

"Mother!" said Faith, — and her gravity gave way hopelessly.

"Squire Deacon sends his best compliments of the season," said Cindy opening the door a while later, "and he says they'll be to take supper percisely at four. I'm free to confess he don't look much sweeter than common," added Cindy.

"Pray Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden as they left the table, "what is the precise depth of water down at the shore?"

Faith had very near broke down again, for she laughed and blushed, a good deal more than her wont; and at last replied that "it depended on how far people went in — she never went very far herself."

"I was naturally curious," said he.

After a dinner somewhat more hasty than usual, Mr. Linden and two of the ladies set off for the shore. The blackberry jam, or some other hindering cause, kept Mrs. Derrick at home.

The country by daylight looked rich and smooth. At not a very great distance a slight hilly elevation bounded the horizon line, which nearer seen would have been found bristling with stern grey rock, itself a ridge of rock, one of the ribs of the rigid soil. But where the lane led down to the water, fair fields and crops extended on every side, spotted very picturesquely with clumps of woodland. All looked genial in the summer light. If the distant rocks spoke a stubborn soil, the fine growth between said that man had overcome it; and the fine order everywhere apparent said too that the victory had been effectual for man's comfort and prosperity. The stone walls, in some places thin and open, told of times when they had been hurriedly put up; moss on the rail fences said the rails had been long doing duty; within them no fields failed of their crops, and no crops wanted hoeing or weeding. No straw lay scattered about the ricks; no barrack roofs were tumbling down; no gate-posts stood sideways; no barnyards shewed rickety outhouses or desolate mangers. No cattle were poor, and seemingly, no people. It was a pretty ride the party had, in the little wagon, behind an old horse

that knew every inch of the way and trotted on as if he were a part of it.

"How do you like Pattaquasset, Mr. Linden?" said Faith, leaning forward to reach him where he sat alone on the front seat.

"I like it — well," he answered a little musingly.

They came to the bridge and stream; and now they could see that Awasee River did not fill its sometime channel, but flowed in a bottom of alluvial soil, rich in bright-coloured marsh grass, which stretched up the country between two of those clumps of woodland they had seen from a distance. A little further on, just where the sandy road branched off to the shore, there stood a farm house, with a conglomerate of barns and outhouses, all painted to match, in bright yellow picked out with red.

"Do you see that settlement of farm-houses?" said Faith, leaning forward again, — "of all sizes, in uniform?"

"Is it the fashion here to put 'earmarks' on buildings?" he answered with a smile.

"Mr. Linden! You should ask Mr. Simlins that. I see his wagon there — he'll be down at the shore very likely. He's a character. He lives a mile and a half further on, just where the road turns off to Mrs. Somers'."

"Simlins!" was the only reply.

"He's a good sort of man, but he's funny."

"What is a good sort of man, Miss Faith?"

The old horse was walking quietly along the sandy road, and the smell of the salt water was becoming pleasantly perceptible.

"I suppose I mean by it," said Faith thoughtfully, "a man who is not *very good*, but who is on the good side of things."

"I don't call that a good sort," said Mr. Linden, — then looking round with a little smile he said, "You ought to say 'sort o' good.'"

Faith looked serious and as if she felt half rebuked.

"But," she said, "you would not call that a *bad* sort?"

"Then you mean that he is in the same road with what you call the *best* people, only not so far advanced?"

"No," said Faith doubtfully, "I don't mean so much as that. — I don't think Mr. Simlins is in the same road with you."

"How many best roads are there to the same place? As for instance — does it matter which of these two I take to the shore?"

"Only one leads to the shore," saith Faith.

"Yet they seem to lie near together at the outset. The same is true of 'the other shore.'"

Faith sat back in her place with a face exceedingly unlike a young lady who was going to a merry-making.

But they were near the shore now; not only the salt smell proclaimed it, but they could see the various bathing and other houses collected at the place, and the flag which floated high from the flag-staff, telling all who were not concerned that it was a gala day. A piece of ground immediately surrounding these buildings was fenced in; as they neared the gate, it was opened for them, and a tall farmer-looking man, whose straw hat shaded a sensible face, nodded as they passed.

"That is Mr. Simlins!" said Faith.

Mr. Simlins seemed for the present to be king of the castle. Horses there were, and wagons, standing here and there, and one or two oldish faces looked out from the windows of one long shanty; but the rest of the birds had flown — into the water! It was the time of low tide, and the long strips of rippling water which lay one beyond the other, were separated by sand banks nearly as long. In these little tide lakes were the bathers, — the more timid near shore, taking almost a sand bath; the more adventurous going further and further out, till the last party bathed beyond the last sand bank. Not dressed in the latest Cape May fashion, nor the latest fashion of any kind; for each had brought some dress too old to be hurt with salt water. Calico frocks, of every hue and pattern, — caps, handkerchiefs, sun-bonnets, — gave additional

force to the cries and shouts and screams which were wafted inshore.

But when they began to come in! — and when the bathing dresses were hung on the fence to dry! — and when mermaid visions appeared at the windows! — who shall describe the scene then? Over all, a blue smoke now began to curl and float, rising from the stove-pipe of the eating-house.

Mr. Linden had driven up to one of the fence posts, and fastening his horse stood a while watching the show, till the bathers began to draw in from the water. Then helped the ladies out.

"Which of these baskets contains my tea, Miss Faith?" he said. "I feel a particular interest in that basket."

"Perhaps your tea is in some other basket," said Faith; "but both of these must come into the eating-house. O, thank you, Mr. Linden!"

The eating-house was a long shanty, built for the express purpose of feasting picnic and other parties. At one end of it, within the house, was a well of excellent water; at the other end a door opened into a cooking-house, which held a stove; and through the length of the apartment a narrow table of boards was erected, ready to be covered with any description and any succession of table-cloths. In this room Mr. Linden with Faith's help deposited her baskets; while Miss Danforth looked on. At the door of the shanty coming out they met Mr. Simlins. Faith made the introductions.

"Happy to have your acquaintance," said Mr. Simlins. "This is a piece of Pattaquasset, sir, that we all of us rather cord'ally like. You haven't seen it before?"

"Yes, I don't wonder you like it," said Mr. Linden. "The sea-shore is no novelty to me, sir — such a shore party is."

"I hope you'll enjoy it, as the rest of us do. We all do as we like, Mr. Linden — I hope you'll use the grounds as your own. We have the flag flying, sir, and it ratifies liberty to all who amuse themselves under it."

Mr. Linden looked up at the stars and stripes, with an acknowledging smile for the benefits thereby conferred.

"Faith! Faith Derrick!" called out half a dozen mermaids from the bathing house; and Faith was obliged to go, — while her companions walked up the green slope, and entered into a deep discussion of the crops and the weather.

A while after, when Faith was busy about the supper table — twenty young voices chiming around her, another voice that she did not know spoke close at her elbow.

"Miss Faith — I am Reuben Taylor. Mr. Linden told me to come to you and make myself useful. Is there anything I can do? — would you like some round clams? — Father's out there in the boat."

The earnest eyes said how gladly he would do 'anything.'

"Who is your father?" said Faith, a little surprised.

"My father's a fisherman."

"The very thing!" said Faith — "if you'll help me roast 'em, Reuben. I guess nobody else'll want to do it, but I'd just as lieve. Can you have 'em here quickly? and I'll see and have the stove ready."

"O I'll fetch 'em — and roast 'em too, Miss Faith. I'm used to it," he added, with a half bashful half admiring glance at her face.

Faith had the fire ready by the time Reuben returned with the clams. The kettle was on to boil, and nothing else was wanted of the fire, as it happened, by anybody; least of all to roast clams, that necessarily making a kitchen prisoner of the roaster; so Faith and her new coadjutor had the field — *i. e.* the cooking house — all to themselves. Miss Danforth was to leave Pattaquasset in a day or two, and was busy talking to everybody. Readily the clams opened their shells on the hot stove-top; savourily the odour of steaming clam juice spread itself abroad; but Faith and Reuben were 'in' for it, and nobody else cared to be in.

So when Miss Cecilia Deacon had finished her toilet, which

was somewhat of the longest, as it had been one of the latest, she found nobody but her brother to apply to on the score of her hostess duties.

"Sam!" said the young lady pinching her brother's arm, — "I haven't been introduced to Mr. Linden."

"He'll keep," was the encouraging reply.

"Yes, but supper won't. See, Sam! — I haven't been introduced to him, and I *must*."

The Squire nodded his head politely, and began to whistle.

"Come! — you Sam — you've got to, and in a hurry. I can't find Faith, or I'd make her."

"Well — I can't find him," said the Squire pettishly. "I haven't got neither of 'em in my pocket — nor the crown of my hat," he added, taking off that useful article of dress for the express purpose of looking into it. "My deliberate judgment is to have supper."

"Don't be a goose, Sam! What's the use of asking him, if you didn't mean to conduct yourself?"

"Didn't ask him."

"Who did?"

"*I* didn't hear anybody," was the Squire's reply.

"*Don't* you mean to introduce me, Sam Deacon?" said his sister in a tone which was rather over the verge of patience.

"Jem Williams!" said the Squire, calling up a spruce embodiment of blue cloth, brass buttons, and pink cravat,— "I say! here's Cilly off the hooks to get hold of the new teacher. Whereabouts do you s'pose he is?"

"Really Squire!" said Jem Williams, with a silly little laugh, "I couldn't testify! Reckon he knows Miss Cilly 'd keep hold on him *ef* she got a chance!"

"Sha'n't speak to you in a month, Jem!" said the lady with a toss of her head and some heightening of the really pretty colour in her cheeks. "You may fix it as you've a mind to, among you, and let anybody that likes bring him in to supper! *I'm* going in, out of the way, myself."

Whither she went, on the spur, as good as her word; nor shewed her pretty face again outside.

Meanwhile Reuben and Faith had worked on through their basket of clams, and now the last were sputtering on the stove. The work had been done almost in silence, for though the excitement now and then made Reuben break into a low whistle of some tune or other, he always checked himself the next moment with a very apologetic look. For the rest, if he had not done all the work himself, it certainly was not his fault. Now, watching quietly the opening shells of that last dozen of clams, Reuben remarked,

"I *hope* Mr. Linden won't forget about supper!"

"Why what about it?" said Faith. "Why should he forget? or what if he does?"

The last sentence seemed to puzzle Reuben.

"I don't know, ma'am," he said, — "it's better before everybody eats it up."

"Who's going to eat it up?" said Faith. "Where is he?"

"He went down on the sands with me," said Reuben, "but he didn't come up again. Maybe he has now. He liked it down there, real well.

Faith went to the shutter window and flung it open, and looked to see whether or no the missing gentleman had returned to the shore. It was a fair view that lay spread before her. The low beams of the sun gave a cool afternoon look to everything; the sloop sails shone and gleamed in the distance; down by the muscle rocks one little boat lay rocking on the advancing tide, which was fast covering the sand banks and connecting the strips of water; and the freshening breeze curled the little waves as they came dancing in, and brought a low sweet murmur to the shore. One or two gulls sailed floatingly about, and a brown mink — perceiving that the company had retreated to higher ground — came out and aired himself on one of the rocks.

But Faith saw none of these things, — for in swinging open her shutter (which the wind caught and clapped up against

the house) she so nearly swung it against Mr. Linden that *her* first look was a startled one.

"Miss Faith!" he said, turning round, "what can you possibly be about!"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Linden!" — said Faith.

"Is that all you are about?"

"You were anxious about your supper, Mr. Linden — Are you ready for it?"

"Much more ready than anxious, Miss Faith."

"How do you like the shore to-day?" said Faith, dropping her voice, and giving a glance of her eye to the fair, cool sunlight colours on the water and shore and shipping — fresh as the very sea-breeze itself, and glittering as the water's thousand mirrors could make them.

He turned and looked again, drawing in the breeze with a deep breath that more than answered her question.

"How do you like this?" he said, handing her through the window a little miniature tree of red sea-weed. Then, while she examined it, he repeated, —

" 'When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with sea-weed from the rocks;

" 'From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

" 'From the tumbling surf that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas; —

"'Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main;
Till in shelter'd coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.'"

Faith's eye was upon the sprig of sea-weed while these verses were repeating, — then she looked up at the speaker with an intenseness in which oddly mingled some strong feeling of sorrow or regret.

"It's beautiful!" — she said, — "beautiful! — both the one and the other. But there are a great many things there I don't understand," — she added once more with a smile. "If there was time — but there isn't. — Mr. Linden, Reuben and I have been roasting clams."

"Yes, Miss Faith," he said answering the smile and stepping nearer the window. "So one of my senses informed me. Do you know what that is in your hand?"

"It's sea-weed, isn't it?"

"Yes. And moreover — Miss Faith, that is part of your marine Flora. Now what about the clams?"

"My *what?*" said Faith. "First tell me, please, what you said."

"Your marine Flora."

"What is that?"

"The particular department of life in the sea, of which this is a specimen."

Faith looked puzzled, and amused.

"You don't mean to enlighten me more than you can help," she said. "But why do you call it Flora? you used that word before. And oh Mr. Linden — You can't tell me now, for supper's all ready."

His eyes looked amused too, and laying a clover head on the window, he said,

"That is part of your land Flora," — then pushed the shutter to rather quick, but softly; and Faith heard the reason thereof as follows.

"Wal sir — ef this be you, I've looked all over for you."

"How was it that you overlooked me then, sir?" was Mr. Linden's reply.

"Don't jes know," laughed Jem Williams, — "but Miss Cilly Deacon wants you the worst kind."

"And where shall I go to receive her commands?" said Mr. Linden.

Faith heard their retreating steps, and turning to take off her apron saw the dish of hot clams still on the stove, and that Reuben had removed himself outside the door, quite beyond the conversation but not beyond call. He stood looking thoughtfully out towards the muscle rocks.

"Oh Reuben! there you are. Come!" said Faith; "you're going in with me. *You*'re going to have some supper to-night, whoever else does. You open the door, and I'll take in this dish. You keep by me, Reuben."

"Please let me take the dish, then, Miss Faith, — I can open the door first."

But Faith had her own way, and followed by Reuben carried the clams into the supper room, where some of the company were already seated, and others stood waiting. Squire Deacon had not only given the desired introduction, but had (self-denyingly) placed Mr. Linden next Miss Cilly at the table, — where he stood.

"Here's a contribution," said Faith, — "if somebody 'll make a place for it. Thank you, Mr. Deacon. Now Reuben, — come here."

And refusing more than one offer of a place at the table, Faith made her way down to the 'well end' where there was room for two — at a remote distance from the tea and coffee.

What else was there not, upon that table!

"Won't you take a seat, Mr. Linden?" said Miss Cecilia. "I hope you've got room there. Jerushy, can't you shove down a little? I hope my coffee-pot's not disagreeable."

"I hope not!" said Mr. Linden, surveying the coffee-pot. "How long does it take to declare itself, Miss Deacon?"

"O! it won't do anything, but spout coffee," said the young lady, — "if you don't mind that. Won't you be helped to what you like, Mr. Linden? I hope you have enjoyed our shore party this afternoon."

"Thank you" — said Mr. Linden, feeling perhaps that it was not *their* party he had enjoyed, — "there has been a combination of pleasant things. As far as I could judge the bathers enjoyed their particular expedition."

"O yes, it was delightful — invigorating. Mr. Simlins, I think Mr. Linden will like a piece of that cherry-pie with his clams. Do you take cheese, Mr. Linden? Is your coffee agreeable? There is the cold tongue by you, Jerushy. — I hope you like Pattaquasset."

"Ask Mr. Linden whether Pattaquasset ain't a good place for handsome gals," said Mr. Simlins, as he handed over the piece of cherry-pie. "He knows by this time. I say there's a con-catenation of beauty now here this afternoon. If you look from the top to the bottom of the table, now, ain't it true, sir?"

Mr. Linden certainly looked from the top to the bottom of the table, and then setting the plate of cherry-pie as far from his clams as he could, he said,

"Miss Deacon — let me help you, — tell me where these cups belong, and I will convey them to their destination."

"I thought they'd shove down somehow," said the young lady. "Jerushy, *do* pass the coffee! They're for anybody down there who'll take coffee. Tea'll be along presently," added Miss Cecilia, raising her voice a little to give the information. "Don't you trouble yourself, Mr. Linden."

But Mr. Linden secured one, and carrying it down to Faith, requested her to stir it and taste it, and not give him the trouble of coming back with the sugar-bowl.

"What will you have?" he said while she obeyed his directions. "Here are all the pies that can be thought of except the musical one recorded in history."

"And so," said Faith with a laughing flash of her usually soft eye, "you immediately give me a desire for the one not

here! It's like you, Mr. Linden. No, thank you — I'll have none of these. I believe Reuben has a desire for some of the clams he and I have roasted."

"I'm afraid I cannot get them away from Squire Deacon!" he said, "but I'll try."

The Squire however held fast to the dish, and rising from his place midway at the table, insisted upon taking it to Faith himself.

"Miss Faith," he said, "you have ruined my supper by sitting down here. My appetite has quite forsaken me," (whereupon Jem Williams observed, "that warn't strange.") — "and the worst is," added the Squire, "I can't maintain the constant supervision of your plate which my feelings prompt. I am too far off" — he concluded in a melancholy tone.

"I say, Squire!" said Jem Williams, "you bain't *mor*'n as far agin as *he*" — with a nod towards the upper end of the table.

Squire Deacon lowered, but for the present his feelings were restrained.

"Mr. Simlins," said Endecott, when he had resumed his seat, "I ask you — as one who knows the country — whereabouts does the concatenation you spoke of reach a climax?"

"The star you look at is always the brightest," said the farmer. "However, I think the clams is the best thing at table — or *near* the best," with a slight glance towards Squire Deacon and the dish at the 'well end.' "I've a legendary attachment to beauty, sir; my father married the three prettiest wives in the country."

"I say, Squire," said Jem Williams, "Mr. Simlins says you'r hot."

"Hot?" said Squire Deacon, flushing up very much, and setting down the clams, — "that dish is. *I*'m as cool as all these cucumbers accumulated into a heap."

"Hope you'll stay where you are, then," said Mr. Simlins. "I'm cool too. Don't come near me, or we shall be in a state of concentration."

Mr. Linden remarked that that was an excellent point when reached.

"What point?" said Squire Deacon, who had returned to his seat with the strong impression that everybody was laughing at him, under the special guidance of the new teacher. "You know mighty little of the points round here, I tell *you*."

"The point of concentration is found in various places, sir," said Mr. Linden: "though I grant you it is rare."

"What do you know about Pattaquasset points?" repeated the Squire, — "or Pattaquasset people — or Pattaquasset water either, for that matter? Just you go down here when the tide's in — and afore you know where you are you'll find yourself wading round over your head."

"No sir — never," said Mr. Linden with great assurance.

"Why not? how're you goin' to help it?" said Squire Deacon.

"When I reach *that* point," said Mr. Linden, "I shall swim."

And Faith heard Reuben Taylor's smothered laugh of great gratification.

"Hope you haven't spoiled your own supper, Squire," said Mr. Simlins, "by your complacency in carrying about them hot clams. Have somethin' this way?"

While this question was getting its answer, Faith sat back in her chair and looked up and down the length of the table. It presented a distinguished 'after-supper' view, but the demands of the company had not yet ceased. Mr. Simlins was still discussing cheese and politics; Jem Williams was deep in cherry pie; plum cake was not out of favour with the ladies. The Squire was hard at work at *his* supper, which had been diversely and wickedly interrupted. He was making up for lost time now; while his sister, much disengaged, was bending her questions and smiles on Mr. Linden. Faith tried to see Mr. Linden, but she couldn't; he was leaning back from the table, and her eyes went out of doors. It was too fair and sweet there to be cooped up from it. The sun had just set.

Faith could not see the water; the windows of the eating house looked landward; but the air which came in at them said where it had come from, and breathed the salt freshness of the sea into her face.

But presently every chair was pushed back. And now there was no more silence nor quiet. The busy swarm poured out of the supper room; the men to lounge or tackle their horses, the women to gather up the bathing dresses from the fence, to look round, laugh, and go in again to pack up the dishes. It would seem that this last might be a work of time, each had to find her own through such a maze of confusion. There was a spoon of Miss Cecilia's providing, in a cup of Mrs. Derrick's, beside a plate of Mrs. David's, and before a half-eaten cherry pie which had been compounded in the distant home and by the fair fingers of Miss Jerusha Fax. However, most people know their own at least; and as on the present occasion nobody had any particular desire to meddle with what was not her own, the difficulty was got through with. The baskets and hampers were packed again and stowed in their respective wagons; and everybodywas bidding good bye to everybody. Noisy thanks and praises fell liberally to the share of Miss Cecilia and her brother, and the afternoon was declared to have been "splendid."

CHAPTER V.

For some weeks the little town of Pattaquasset held on its peaceful way as usual. Early summer passed into harvest, and harvest gave way to the first blush of autumn, and still the Mong flowed quietly along, and the kildeers sang fearlessly. For even tenor and happy spirits, the new teacher and his scholars were not unlike the smooth river and its feathered visiters. Whatever the boys were taught, they certainly learned to be happy; and Mr. Linden's popularity knew no bounds in his own domain. Neither did it end there: those fair members of the Pattaquasset society who thought early walks good for their health, felt their sleepy eyes well

paid for keeping open when they met Mr. Linden. Those who were fond of evening expeditions, declared that his figure in the twilight was 'quite a picture,' and made them feel 'so safe,' — a great slander, by the way, on Pattaquasset. Mr. Simlins was his firm friend, and many another — known and unknown. Squire Deacon, I regret to say, was an exception.

Squire Deacon declared (confidentially) that he never *had* thought the new teacher fit for his business, *no* how. As far as he could hear, Mr. Linden had never taught school before, and in that case what could you expect? "Moreover," said the Squire, "I am creditably informed, that the first day he kep' school *here*, he begun by asking the boys who made them! — as if *that* had anything to do with geography. Of course it's nat'ral for a man to ask what he knows he can answer if the boys don't," added Squire Deacon in the way of kind explanation.

Whereupon, Jonathan Fax, the Squire's right hand man, requested to be informed, "*why* ef a man was poor didn't he dress as though he felt so, — and *why* ef he warn't rich did he act as though he war?" And thus by degrees, there was quite an opposition party in Pattaquasset — if that could be opposition which the object of it never opposed. By degrees too, the murmurs became more audible.

"Faith, child," said Mrs. Derrick in a cautious whisper, coming out where Faith sat on the porch, bathed in the late September light: "Faith, child, where's our Linden tree?" (Mrs. Derrick thought she had concealed her meaning *now*, if anybody did overhear.)

Faith started, more than so gentle a question seemed to call for.

"He's gone down to the post-office, mother."

Her mother stood still and thought.

"Child," she said, "I never thought we had any fools in our town before."

"I didn't know there were so many," said Faith. "What new, mother?"

"Child," she said, "you know more than I about some things — what do you s'pose fools *can* do? Isn't he a whole tree of knowledge?"

There is no fear of him, mother!" Faith said with a smile, which if the subject of it valued any faith in the world but his own it would have gratified him to see. "They can't touch him. They may vex him."

Mrs. Derrick shook her head, softly, behind Faith's chair, then turned and went back into the house; not caring, as it seemed, to spread the vexation. Then after a little interval of bird music, the gate opened to admit Reuben Taylor. He held a bunch of water lilies — drooping their fair heads from his hand; his own head drooped a little too. Then he raised it and came firmly on.

"Is Mr. Linden home, Miss Faith?"

"No, Reuben — He will be directly, I guess. Do you want to see him?"

"No" — said Reuben, — "I don' know as I do, more than usual. I *have* seen him all day. He wanted some pond lilies, Miss Faith — at least he told me to bring 'em. Maybe it was you wanted 'em."

"I'll give them to him, Reuben. What's the matter with *you*?"

But Reuben stood silent — perhaps from the difficulty of speaking.

"Miss Faith," he said at last, "is Squire Deacon all the trustees of our school, besides Mr. Somers?"

"No. Why? What about it?"

"*He*'s doin' all the mischief he can," said Reuben concisely.

"What mischief has he done, Reuben?" said Faith, waiting upon the boy's answer with an anxious face.

"Well" — said Reuben, as if he could not put it in plain words, — "he's tryin' to turn folks' heads — and some heads is easy turned."

"How did you know this? — and whose head has he turned, Reuben? Not yours?"

"They'd have to turn my *heart*, Miss Faith," was Reuben's subdued answer. Then he looked up and listened — hearing a step he well knew. Nor that alone, for a few low notes of a sweet hymn tune, seemed to say there were pleasant thoughts within reach of at least one person. Then Reuben broke forth.

"They can't keep him out of heaven, anyway! — nor me, neither," he added softly. But he ran down the steps and out of the gate, passing his teacher with only a bow; and once beyond the fence, Reuben's head dropped in his hands.

"Reuben! I want you!" — said Mr. Linden. But Reuben was out of sight. Faith stood between the house and the gate.

"Where is he? can't you make him hear? I want that boy!" she said.

"I can run after him — with doubtful success."

"The foolish fellow brought these for you, Mr. Linden," said Faith, giving the lilies where they belonged.

"Complimentary, Miss Faith!" said Mr. Linden, taking the lilies and smelling them gravely.

"*He* is," said Faith, "and you speak as if *I* wasn't."

"Will it redeem my character — or Reuben's — if I bestow the lilies upon you, Miss Faith? I think that was their destination."

Faith took the lilies back again, with a slight smile and flush, and stood attentively turning them over for a while. Then suddenly said "Thank you."

"What did you want of Reuben Taylor?" said Mr. Linden. "Cannot I do as well?"

"I should be sorry to think you wanted, Mr. Linden, what I wanted to give him."

"That sounds terrific! But Reuben is under my jurisdiction — I don't allow anybody to scold him but myself. So deliver it to me, Miss Faith, and I will give it to him — duly pointed and sharpened up."

"No," said Faith smiling, "you couldn't do it so well as I. I wanted to say two words to him to put nonsense out of his head."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Linden, looking grave, — "I am as anxious on that point as you can be. What nonsense has he got in his head?"

Faith hesitated, flushed and paled a little, and looked at her lilies.

"I don't know whether I ought to speak of it," she began, with much less than her usual composure of speech. "Perhaps it is not my business. Please forgive me if I speak wrong. But I half think you ought to know it." —

"I'll try to bear the knowledge," he said smiling — "if you will promise to speak the cabalistic two words that were to have such effect upon Reuben. So you want to put nonsense into *my* head, Miss Faith?"

"Perhaps you know it already?" said Faith. "At any rate I think I should feel better satisfied if you did know it. Mr. Linden," she said speaking low — "do you know that Squire Deacon has been trying to do you mischief?"

"Just suppose for a moment that you are one of my scholars, and give me a definition of mischief."

To judge by the unbent lines of Faith's brow, there was nothing very disagreeable to her in the supposition. Yet she had a look of care for the 'definition,' too.

"When a man is meaning to do harm, isn't he doing mischief?"

"Only to himself."

"But do you mean that one *can't* do harm to others in this world?"

"You said 'when a man is *meaning* to do harm.'"

"Ah," said Faith laughing, "I should want a great deal of teaching before I could give a definition that would suit you! Well then, isn't *harm* mischief?"

"I'm afraid I must yield that point."

"Then," said Faith simply, but very modestly, — "we come back to where we started from?"

"What shall we do there?" said he smiling.

"Nothing, perhaps," said Faith with the same simplicity. "I only thought it right to put you there, Mr. Linden."

"Thank you, Miss Faith. Now will you please pronounce over me the two words intended for Reuben?"

Faith laughed a little, but then said gravely, "Mr. Linden, I should be very sorry to think you needed them."

"It's impossible always to avoid being very sorry: I *want* them, at all events. Haven't you just been putting nonsense into my head?"

"Have I?" said Faith.

"Do you suppose there was any there before?"

"I — don't — think," — said Faith, surveying his face, — "there is much there now. I guess you don't need the two words, Mr. Linden. I was going to tell Reuben he was a goose for thinking that that man could hurt you."

His face changed a little.

"Poor Reuben!" he said — then with the former look — "On the whole, perhaps it was well he did not come back. If you put those in water they will open their eyes to-morrow. Fresh water — not salt," he added as he followed her into the house, — "they are not part of the marine Flora."

Tea was ready, with its usual cheer of eatables and pleasant faces; not quite with its usual flow of talk. Mrs. Derrick certainly had something bewildering on her mind, for she even looked at her guest two or three times when he was looking at her. The pond lilies were alone in the twilight parlour.

That was probably the reason why Lucinda introduced Parson Somers into the tea-room, the parson happening to call at this identical time.

Parson Somers was always in a genial state of mind; — always, at least, whenever he came into Mrs. Derrick's parlour; by the testimony of numbers it was the same in many other parlours. He came in so now; gave a smile all round; and took an empty chair and place at the table like one who found it pleasant.

"Well, I declare, Mrs. Derrick," said Mr. Somers when he was seated, — "I don't think there's — a — a more cheerful room in Pattaquasset than this one; why, you always

have everything agreeable here. A cup of tea, now — I didn't expect it."

"Why we always *do* have tea, Mr. Somers," said Mrs. Derrick, "but it don't seem strong to-night. Lucindy — take the teapot and make some fresh."

"These baked apples are strong — in numbers at least," said Mr. Linden, as he bestowed one upon Mr. Somers.

"Thank you! — it's all strong enough, Mrs. Derrick — thank you! — very good. And Mr. Linden — how are you — a — getting along with your juvenile charge? Confining work, sir, — isn't it?"

"Rather, sir — to the body."

"Not to the mind, eh? Well — I should have thought that to a gentleman like you it would prove — a — *more* deleterious to the mental faculties. But I suppose you find yourself rewarded by your pupils' improvement and — regard!"

"Yes sir — their regard is very precious to me," was the quiet reply.

"I should think so! Why there's that boy Reuben Taylor — strange father that boy has — fisherman; — I met that boy this evening, in the street, and he was crying, — down a little below here — he was going home. I asked him — ha — if Mr. Linden had been dealing hardly with him? — and I declare! — I didn't know but Reuben would have attacked me on the spot."

"Has Mr. Linden a character in the village for cruelty?" said Faith.

"I — I declare — not that I know of, Miss Faith. I should think it could not be deserved. That boy's attachment is certainly — ha — very warm. My dear Mrs. Derrick, how well Miss Faith is looking! She always looks well; but to-night — ha — the colour of her cheeks is — to be remarked."

"You will get a character for cruelty, Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "if you ask about my character before my face."

Faith looked up as if she would willingly have asked a

question; but that being in present circumstances impossible, she merely uttered a quiet little 'no,' and went on with her tea and with a colour still further improved. A quiet little 'yes,' of about equal prominence, did not divert the attention of Mr. Somers from his own remarks.

"It's delightful to see — really," said that gentleman. "But Mr. Linden — ha — I am sorry to find that you haven't the good will of our neighbour, Squire Deacon. The Squire's a valuable man — very! — the Squire's a valuable man in the town. I am sorry. Do you know, Mr. Linden — ha — how it has happened?"

"Have you asked the Squire himself, sir?" said Mr. Linden.

"Why — no, sir, I haven't. I — ha — wanted to get at the truth of it, that I might, if possible, do something to heal the breach. Now you are doing a valuable work in Pattaquasset, sir — I should be sorry to see it interrupted — very — and I thought the best way would be to try to find out what the matter was, in order if possible to its being removed. And to get at the truth it is often best to hear both sides."

"But I have no side to tell, sir," said Mr. Linden — smiling in spite of himself. "I cannot deny that Squire Deacon seems to withhold his good will — I think it is for him to tell his reasons."

"Then you really have no idea what it can be about? and I may tell him so? Because that would be a great point."

"No sir, you may not tell him that."

"Then you *have* an idea what the matter is?" said Mr. Somers eagerly. "Then, sir, if you will be so good as to let me know what it is — I have no doubt — I entertain no doubt — we shall be able to smooth it all away, and have peace."

"You cannot prove one man's ideas by another man's," said Mr. Linden.

"Then you can give me no help?" said Mr. Somers regretfully. "But Mr. Linden — ha — it strikes me that it

would be useful for me to know your view of the cause of offence — whatever it is — before I know his. One may correct the other."

"There has been no offence given sir," said Mr. Linden. "That the Squire has taken offence we both know, — why he has taken it — *if* I know — I have no right to tell you. Squire Deacon might justly complain of me if I did. It is from no disrespect to you, believe me."

"I say!" said Cindy coming into the room with a basket, — "here's Sam Stoutenburgh been and fetched some Stoutenburgh Sweetenings — for his teacher, he says. I'm free to confess," added Cindy as she set down the basket by Mr. Linden, "he said if he *would* like to do anythin' better with 'em, it would just be to shy 'em at Squire Deacon's head — so I guess they aint over and above ripe."

"Ha! — Very pleasant, certainly! — very gratifying," said Mr. Somers rising. "Mr. Linden — I have no more to say. You are a gentleman, sir, and understand these matters. I will see what I can do. Mrs. Derrick — I thank you for your tea, ma'am — I am sorry there should be anything disagreeable, — but I have no doubt it will all be set right — The Squire is a good-feeling man — I have no doubt of it. Miss Faith — ha! — why Mrs. Derrick this colour is *too* deep, — it isn't natural. It looks feverish!"

"Do the Pattaquasset ladies use any rouge but their own sea breezes?" asked Mr. Linden.

"Ha! we *do* get the sea breezes here — pleasantly," answered Mr. Somers. "Good evening!" —

Mr. Linden accompanied the visiter to the little gate, and returning paced up and down the moonlight porch, followed only by his shadow.

CHAPTER VI.

While Mr. Somers was enjoying his cup of unexpected tea at Mrs. Derrick's, Squire Deacon and Miss Cilly had a sociable tête à-tête over theirs; for Joe Deacon, who was in the full enjoyment of some fourteen years of boyhood, scarcely made a third in the conversation until his appetite was satisfied.

Conversation indeed hardly existed during the first portion of the meal. Miss Cilly poured out her tea and broke her biscuit with a certain prim sort of elegance which belonged to that young lady — as at least she believed. But sipping tea and nibbling biscuit went on in company with thoughts.

"Sam, what are you bothering yourself about Mr. Linden for?"

"How long since you was made a trustee?" said the Squire, beginning his sentence with an untranslatable sort of grunt, and ending it in his teacup.

"Give us the sugar bowl down this way, Cilly," said Joe, — "this apple sarce is as sour as sixty."

"I've been your trustee ever since you was up to anything," said his sister. "Come Sam — don't you begin now. What's made you so crusty?"

"It aint the worst thing to be crusty," said the Squire, while Joe started up and seized the sugar bowl. "Shews a man's more'n half baked, any how."

Miss Cilly vouchsafed a rather sour smile to these manifestations of disposition on the part of both her brothers.

"Well, what has he done?"

"Sure enough," said the Squire, (he kept his small stock of big words for company) "what *has* he done? That's just what I can't find out."

"What do you want to find out for? What ails him?"

"Suppose he hasn't done nothing" — said the Squire, — "is that the sort o' man to teach litteratur in Pattaquasset?"

"Lit — *what?*" said his sister with an arch of her head.

"Anything you've a mind to," said the Squire sulkily.

"I wouldn't say anything against Mr. Linden's literature, if I was you; because it's my belief, Sam, it'll stand any pecking you make at it. What's given you such a spite at him? You're a goodnatured fellow enough in general."

"The whole temperature of Pattaquasset's come about since *he* come," replied the Squire comprehensively.

"He's a gentleman!" said Miss Cilly bridling again. "He won't hurt anybody's manners — not the best — if they was to copy him."

"He didn't hurt mine," said Joe patronizingly. "To be sure I didn't go to him long."

"Do the boys like him, Joe?"

"Well I daresay they wouldn't if they could help it," said Joe, "if *that's* any comfort. Some other folks likes him too, — besides Sam."

"Aint he a good teacher?"

"Firstrate —" said Joe, — "taught me all *I* ever learned. I didn't go but four weeks, and Sam thought 'twarn't no use for me to hold on any longer. My! Cilly — he'd make you roll up your eyes in arithmetic!"

"Now Sam Deacon, what do you expect to do by all this fuss you're making?" said his sister judicially.

"What's the use of cross-examining a man at that rate?" said the Squire restlessly. "When I do anything, you'll know it."

"You'll make yourself a fool, one of these fine mornings; that's what I count upon," said Miss Cecilia. "He's a match for you, I have a presentiment, Sam."

"He won't be for you," said the Squire with some heat.

"There's Mr. Simlins goin' along," said Joe, who having finished his supper was gazing out of the window. "O my! if he was cut up into real simlinses, what a many there'd be!"

"You hush, Joe!" said his sister wrathfully. "He's comin' in."

And Mr. Simlins' tall figure did indeed come through the

gate and up the walk, from which a very few more steps and minutes brought him to the tea table.

"Well, Mr. Simlins!" said Miss Cecilia as she gave him his cup, — "you've got back. I heard you were returned."

"Yes!" said the farmer deliberately stirring his tea, — "I've got back! And I'm glad, for one. I've been visiting my relations in New Jersey; and I've made up *my* mind that the Simlinses made a good move when they come to Connecticut."

"You found them all well?" said Miss Cecilia politely.

"Well, no, I didn't," said Mr. Simlins. "How's a man to find five hundred and fifty people all well? 'Taint nature. How's things with you, Squire?"

"Wheat's done well — corn middlin'," replied the Squire, while Joe got behind his sister's chair and whispered.

"There's another name in the diction'ry *sounds* like your'n, though they aint spelled just alike."

"Goin' to school, Joe?" growled Mr. Simlins.

"No *sir*," said Joe. "Mr. Linden teached me all he knowed in a jiffy, — and all I know, too."

"Well — are the other boys learnin' yet?" said Mr. Simlins, as he spread a slice of bread pretty thick with butter.

"S'pose so" — said Joe, — "all they kin."

"It's hard work!" said Mr. Simlins. "I feel it now! Never ploughin' made my back ache like learnin'. I wonder whatever they made me school trustee for, seein' I hate it like pison. But I s'pose we mustn't quarrel with onerous duties," said the farmer, carrying on sighing and bread and butter and tea very harmoniously together. "I shouldn't mind takin' a look at your last copy-book, Joe, if it would be agreeable."

"O Mr. Linden kep' that," said Joe unblushingly, "'cause it was so good lookin'."

"He was so fond of you?" said Mr. Simlins. "How come he to let you go?"

"I staid away," said Joe, drumming on the back of Miss

Cecilia's chair. "Cilly's got the rest of the copy-books — she likes the writin' too."

"Joe, behave yourself!" said his sister. "Mr. Simlins knows better than to believe you."

"Did you ever get flogged, Joe, for bad writin'?" said the farmer.

"Worse'n that!" said Joe, shaking his head, — "I've had to do it over!"

"Now you've got to do it over for me," said Mr. Simlins. "You write your name for me there — the best you kin — and 'Pattaquasset, Connecticut' — I want to see what the new school's up to."

"No" — said Joe — "I aint agoin' to do it. You ask one of the other boys. It wouldn't tell you nothin' if I did, 'cause I learned writin' afore, — and I didn't go to him but four weeks, besides." And Joe at once absented himself.

"Is it workin' as straight with all the rest of 'em as it is with him?" said Mr. Simlins. "You and me's got to see to it, you know, Squire — seein' we're honorary individuals."

"Yes," said Squire Deacon, rousing up now Joe was gone — he had a wholesome fear of Joe's tongue — "Yes, Mr. Simlins, — and it's my belief it *wants* seein' to — and he too."

"Joe," — said Mr. Simlins. "Ne-ver fear — he'll see to himself."

"Here's some of *his* writin'," said Joe, returning with a spelling book. "All the boys gets him to write in their books." And laying it down by Mr. Simlins, Joe took his final departure.

"What do the boys want him to write in their books for?" growled Mr. Simlins, surveying the signature.

"I believe," said Miss Cecilia, "he is very popular in the school."

"Well, Squire," pursued Mr. Simlins, "can Joe clinch this?"

"He aint with me — if that's what you mean," said Squire Deacon. "A man's writing don't prove much."

"Don't go no furder;" said Mr. Simlins assentingly. "Well Squire — if *you*'ll go furder I shall be wiser."

And freed from the fear of contradiction, the Squire had not the least objection to going further.

"He's not the man to have here," said Squire Deacon, — "I saw that the first day I saw him. I tried him, — and he didn't toe the mark."

"How did you try him?" growled Mr. Simlins. "I'd like to know how much he's up to. *I* haint found it out yet."

"I tried him, sir," said the Squire, "I tried him with a classical story. Now Miss Faith gave in at once, and said *she* didn't know what it was; but t'other one made believe as though he knew all about it. And if a man aint classical, Mr. Simlins, what is he?"

"I aint classical," growled Mr. Simlins again, "but then I don't set up for to be. I s'pose that makes a difference, Squire; don't it?"

"Some people 's more than they set out to be, and some people 's less," replied the Squire.

"Well, — does *he* set up for to be classical in school? What does he teach 'em?"

"I reckon he sets up for 'most everything he ever heard spoke of, Mr. Simlins. Teach 'em? why he teaches 'em out of all sorts o' superflus books!"

"Does!" said Mr. Simlins with a surprised look. "Our boys don't want none o' your superficies. They've got their bread to make. Give us an invoice o' them books, Squire."

"Just you look at 'em for yourself, Mr. Simlins — then you'll know. Step down there some day in school time and look over the boys. Now I can understand figurs with any man, but *what* 's the use o' crosses and straight lines and Vs turned wrong side up?"

Mr. Simlins pushed back his chair and rubbed his chin.

"Well Squire — you and me are trustees — what in your judgment and opinion had we ought to do, in these precedents?"

"Get rid on him — *I* say," replied the Squire promptly. "Then here he is, leadin' all the girls round town, and for all any one of 'em knows he's a married man."

"Humph! think so?—What do the folks say of him?" said Mr. Simlins. "There's Mrs. Derrick — what does *she* say of him — he's in her house, she ought to have an idee. And Faith — now I'd take that gal's judgment on a'most anything — What do *they* think about him, Squire?"

"Never asked 'em a word," said the Squire stoutly — "nor heard 'em say one, neither. But he gets fur'n letters all the time, Widow Stamp says — and female writin' too. Who knows but he's got a wife in some fur'n country? — or two" — added the Squire, without specifying where the plural belonged. "I'm a justice of peace, Mr. Simlins, and this shouldn't be let go on."

Mr. Simlins looked up from under his brows with a queer look at his host.

"If he has *two*, he must want the school — bad!" – said he. "Well Squire, I'll go along and see what can be done. If I was you, mean time, I'd not say much to no one. There's Judge Harrison, you know; —we can't act without him. Good night t'ye! Squire, I guess he haint *two*?—Anyhow, I wouldn't let fly no warrants till I saw my bird sitting somewhere. It's bad to have 'em hit in a wrong place."

And it was well it was darkish and nobody to look at him; for Mr. Simlins went grinning pretty much all the way between Squire Deacon's house and the house of Mrs. Derrick, where Mr. Linden was entertaining his shadow in the moonlit porch.

"Good even to you!" growled Mr. Simlins as he came up. The grin was gone, and the farmer stood with his wonted solemnity of face and manner. "Where's the rest o' your folks?"

"The rest of *my* folks are a good way off, Mr. Simlins," said the person addressed, giving the questioner his hand; while his shadow exchanged civilities with the shadow of

Mr. Simlins. "When did you come back? I am glad to see you?"

"I'm glad to see myself," said Mr. Simlins. "There's no State like Connecticut, sir. Where's *your* bringin' up place?"

"No one place has had that honour, Mr. Simlins, — I have been brought up from one to another."

"Not Connecticut, eh?"

"Not altogether — I am here just now, as you see, — getting a part of my education. I am one of the Say and Seal people in a way. Won't you come in, Mr. Simlins?"

"Well — I'd as lief see Faith and Mrs. Derrick as a'most any other two folks in Pattaquasset, — but they're a long ways off, you say?"

"No further than the parlour, I believe."

Mr. Simlins was willing to go as far as the parlour, and so the party on the porch adjourned thither. A bright lamp lit the room, by which Faith was mending stockings; while Mrs. Derrick sat in an easy chair a little further off, rocking and knitting.

"Well," said Mr. Simlins, "when the sun goes down *I* think it is time to knock off work; but womenkind don't seem to think so."

"I guess when the sun goes down your work's knocked off, Mr. Simlins," said Mrs. Derrick.

"Fact, Mrs. Derrick, when I'm to home; but when a man's visiting he has to work night *and* day. Moonlight's moonlight now. I declare, in Jersey I thought it was broad sunshine. — You haven't been down to my place yet, Mr. Linden?"

"No sir, not within the gate."

"The Simlins' have held that place, sir, off and on, for nigh three hundred years. We're a good many Simlins' — and we're a good set, I'll say it! a pretty good set. Not thin-skinned, you know, — we can take a scratch without bein' killed — but we never would stand bein' trampled on. We're soft-hearted too; plenty o' what I may call *tendrils*, ready to take hold of anything;

and when we take hold we *do* take hold. We cover a good deal of ground in the country, here and elsewhere — in the various branches. My mother was a Mush, and my grandmother was Citron; a good families those, sir; can't do better than take a wife from one of them, Mr. Linden, if you are so disposed; — you haven't got one already, have you?"

"*What*, sir?" said Mr. Linden, with more sharpness than he often shewed, and which made Mrs. Derrick drop her knitting and look up.

"I thought you wasn't a married man — are you?" said Mr. Simlins, the grin just shewing itself again on his face.

"Is that one of the charges brought against me?" said Mr. Linden, a little too roused himself to pay much heed to Mr. Simlin's questions.

"Well I didn't know as you'd think it a 'charge,'" said Mr. Simlins with an unchanged tone. "I guess you mean to make it true some day, don't you?"

The question fell unheeded — the charge did not; it touched him deeply; touched the proud sense of character; though no words gave evidence of the fact.

"Faith, child," said Mrs. Derrick in that moment of silence, her whisper as low as she thought would reach across the table, "ought we to be here?"

But a very emphatic, "Yes!" from the window, prevented the need of Faith's answer.

"I was only recommending," said Mr. Simlins, "in case you wanted help to make up your mind. The Citrons are all gone to New Jersey — there's a few of the Mushes ramblin' round Connecticut yet. Well Mr. Linden — I hope you and your boys get on commodiously together?"

"Just look into that basket on the table, and see what one of 'em brought him to-night," said Mrs. Derrick. "Those are Stoutenburgh Sweetings, Mr. Simlins."

Mr. Simlins looked at the Sweetings and then looked towards the window.

"I'd like to hear you speak a little on that point," he said. "Fact is, there's been some winds blowin' about Pattaquasset

that aint come off beds o' roses; and I'd like to find where the pison is and clap a stopper on it for the future. It's easy done."

Mr. Linden looked up with his usual expression, only the smile was grave and a little moved, and answered.

"I could say a good deal on that point, Mr. Simlins. Yet I had rather you should ask the boys than me."

"Don't want to ask the boys nothin, bless you!" said Mr. Simlins. "What I want to say is this; — what's the matter between you and the Squire? I've been askin' *him*, and he says you learn the boys to make a V wrong side upward — I can't make nothin' of that," said Mr. Simlins, with again the approach to a grin; — "'taint over easy to tell whether *his* V's are one side up or 'tother. Now I'd like to know from you where the hitch is. The Squire aint likely to set the Mong in a configuration just yet — but if he's swingin' a torch round, I'd jest as lief put it out afore the sparks fly."

"But Mr. Simlins, don't you think it is rather hard measure to ask me why people dislike me?"

"Well — I don't see as I do," said Mr. Simlins placidly; — "'cause I know pretty well it's some chymistry idee of his own; and if I could get hold of it, you see, I should have a better handle. I guess the school never went on better than it's goin'; *he* don't know beans."

"How do you know that I do?" said Mr. Linden smiling. "Why don't you ask him? I think at least half his ill will arises from a mistake."

"Have asked *him*," said Mr. Simlins — "just come from there; — but he's pretty much like them V's we were speakin' about; don't spell nothin'. What's his mistake about then? if I knowed that, I could bring things to a concert."

"Why," said Mr. Linden with grave deliberation, "suppose he wants to buy your house? and takes a walk up that way to set forth his terms."

"Well — suppose he does" — said Mr. Simlins attentively.

"He finds you and Judge Harrison in the porch, you talk

about the crops and the weather, and he tells you he wants your house. What do you say to him?"

"I tell him I don't sell it to no one but a Simlins — nor that neither till I can't live in it no longer myself."

"Is that your fault — or Judge Harrison's?" said Mr. Linden, setting the basket of Stoutenburgh Sweetings on the litte table in the full light of the lamp. "Miss Faith, if those are 'sweetenings,' they may as well do their office."

The farmer sat with his elbows on his knees, touching the tips of his fingers together in thoughtful fashion, and softly blowing the breath through his lips in a way that might have reached the dignity of a whistle if it had had a trifle more of musicalness.

"Is them the sort of lessons you give in school?" he said at length without stirring.

"Why?" said Mr. Linden with a little bit of a smile.

"Ingen-uous," said Mr. Simlins. "It's as good as a book. Mrs. Derrick," added he glancing up at the rocking chair, "is Squire Deacon wantin' to buy your house?"

"My!" said Mrs. Derrick, again laying down her knitting, "can't he be content with his own? I hope he don't want ours," she added, some fear mingling with her surprise.

"Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "do you think if I gave you an apple you would give me a knife?"

"I hope he don't," growled Mr. Simlins as he rose up. "I never heerd that he did. Miss Faith — them Stoutenburgh Sweetings is good eatin'." Faith after setting a pile of plates and knives on the table, had taken up her stocking again.

"Yes Mr. Simlins — I know they are."

"Then why don't you eat one?"

"I don't want it just now, Mr. Simlins — I'd rather finish my work."

"Work!" said the farmer taking an apple. "Well — good evening! I'll go and look after *my* work. I guess we'll fix it. There's a sight o' work in the world!"

With which moral reflection Mr. Simlins departed.

"There'll be more work than sight, at this rate," said Mr.

Linden when he came back from the front door. "Mrs. Derrick, how many stockings does Miss Faith absolutely require for one day?"

"Why I don't know sir — and I don't believe I ever did know since she was big enough to run about." said Mrs. Derrick, her mind still dwelling upon the house.

"Miss Faith, my question stands transferred to you."

"Why you know," said Faith, intent upon the motions of her needle, — "I might require to *mend* in one day what would last me to wear a good many — and I do."

"But,

'The day is done — and the darkness
'Falls from the wing of night.' "

"I never mend stockings till then," said Faith smiling over her work. "Are Sam's apples good?"

"By reputation."

"I thought you were trying them! Why you asked me for a knife, Mr. Linden — and I brought it."

"I'm sure I gave you an apple. Perhaps you thought it was a ball of darning cotton."

"No, I didn't," said Faith laughing. "But what use is my apple to your knife, Mr. Linden?"

"Not much — it has served the purposes of trade."

"But what is the purpose of trade, Mr. Linden, if the articles aren't wanted?"

"I see you are dissatisfied with your bargain," he said, "Well, I will be generous — you shall have the knife too;" and Mr. Linden walked away from the table and went upstairs.

The parlour was very still after that. Faith's needle, indeed, worked with more zeal than ever, but Mrs. Derrick rolled up her knitting and put it in her basket, sighing a little as she did so: then sat and thought.

"Faith, child," she said after a long pause, "do you think the Squire would ever take our house?"

Faith hesitated, and the answer when it came was not satisfactory.

"I don't know, mother."

Mrs. Derrick sighed again, and leaned back in her chair, and rocked; the rockers creaking in rather doleful sympathy with her thoughts. Then an owl on a tree before the door hooted at the world generally, though Mrs. Derrick evidently thought his remarks personal.

"I can't think why he should do that to-night, of all nights in the year!" she said, sitting straight up in her chair. "It never did mean good. Faith — what should we do if he did?" — this time she meant the Squire, not the owl.

"Mother!" — said Faith, and then she spoke in her usual tone. — "We'd find a way."

"Well! —" said Mrs. Derrick, rocking back and forth. Then she started up. "We've got to have biscuits for breakfast, whether or no! It's good I remembered 'em!" And she hurried out of the room, coming back to kiss Faith and say,

"Don't fret, pretty child, whatever happens. Go to bed and to sleep, — I'll make the biscuit." And alert and busy she left the parlour.

Faith's sleep was quiet, but not unbroken. For at that time when all well-disposed people, young or old, are generally asleep (in such a well-ordered community as Pattaquasset) it pleased the younger portion of said community to be awake. Yet they were well-disposed — and also ill! For repairing in a body to Mrs. Derrick's house they gave her nine cheers for her lodger, — thence departing to Squire Deacon's, they gave him as many groans as he could reasonably want for himself. After which the younger part of the community retired in triumph.

It was said, by one adventurous boy, that falling in with Mr. Simlins they impressed him — that his voice helped on the cheers, but not the groans: and indeed the whole story needs confirmation.

Faith heard the groans but faintly, owing to the distance, but the cheers were tremendous.

It is painful to add that Joe Deacon was vociferous in both parties.

CHAPTER VII.

"I HOPE your rest was disturbed last night," said Faith rather gaily, as she came in to the breakfast-table with a plate of biscuits and set them down before Mr. Linden.

"Thank you! you have reason to be quite satisfied in that respect."

"But did you hear them after they left our house?"

"I heard them — really or in imagination — all night, thank you again, Miss Faith — and am as sleepy this morning as you can desire."

"It wasn't I," said Faith. "Now what notice, Mr. Linden, will you think it proper to take of such a proceeding?"

"That was one thing which kept me awake."

"But as you are sleepy now, I suppose the point is decided?"

"You are as quick at conclusions as Johnny Fax," said Mr. Linden smiling, "who always supposes that when I am not using my pen myself I am quite ready to let him have it."

"Does he get it?"

"What should you advise?"

"O Mr. Linden!" said Faith, — "I should advise you to do — just what you do!"

"Unsound!" he said, — "I thought you were a better adviser. But about this matter of the boys — I shall probably read them a lecture, wherein I shall set forth the risk they run of getting sick by such exposure to the night air; also the danger I am in of being sent away from my present quarters, because ladies prefer sleep to disturbance. Having thus wrought up their feelings to the highest pitch, I shall give them a holiday and come home to dinner."

Faith laughed her little low laugh of pleasure; at least it always sounded so. It might be pleasure at one thing or at another; but it was as round and sweet a tone of merry or happy acknowledgment, as is ever heard in this world of discordances.

"But are you really sleepy, sir?" said Mrs. Derrick. "I'm

so sorry! I thought they were doing nothing but good. I never once thought of their waking you up."

Mr. Linden laughed too, a little.

"I shall get waked up" — he said, — "in the course of the day. Unless somebody has drugged my coffee."

"Judge Harrison was here this morning, Mr. Linden, with a message for you," said Faith. "Mother, will you tell Mr. Linden what Judge Harrison said?"

"I'd rather hear you, child, by half," said her mother, with a smile whereon the house cast a little shadow. "Tell him yourself, Faith." And Mrs. Derrick sighed, and took her napkin and rubbed off a spot on the coffeepot.

"Judge Harrison came —" said Faith, and paused.

"And went away" — said Mr. Linden.

"Yes," said Faith. "He stopped on his way somewhere, and came into the kitchen to talk to us. He said he would like, if you would like it, he would like to have a great exhibition of the boys — he knows about the school, he says, and there hasn't been such a school in Pattaquasset since he has been here himself; and he would like to shew it up to the whole town. So if Mr. Linden approved of it, Judge Harrison said, he would have a gathering of all the countryside in some nice place — the Judge has plenty of ground and can get anybody else's besides; and the boys should have a great examination, and after that there should be an entertainment under the trees, for boys and all. And he wanted mother to speak to Mr. Linden, and see whether he would like it. And mother wouldn't," said Faith as she finished.

Mr. Linden raised his eyebrows slightly — then let them fall and likewise his eyes. Then sent his cup to be replenished, gravely remarking to Faith that if she had any drugs, she might put them in now!

"What kind of drugs would you like, Mr. Linden?" said Faith.

"Any that are deeply sedative."

"Sedative?" said Faith, with that look which he often

drew from her, — very earnest, half wistful, half sorrowful, — "I don't know what it means, Mr. Linden."

"It means," said he, his face relaxing a little, "'such as diminish the physical energy, without destroying life,' — such in short, as might qualify a man for the situation of a tame monkey on a pole."

Faith's look changed to a sort of indignant little glance, and her lips parted; but they closed again and her eyes went down to her plate.

"What were you going to remark, Miss Faith?"

Faith blushed a good deal, however the answer came steadily. "I don't think any drugs would do that for you."

"I am in a bad way, then," said Mr. Linden with unmoved gravity. "Because if I survive this trial of what I can bear, I intend to advertise for the afore-named situation. Have you heard of any vacant pole, Miss Faith?"

Faith looked at him with a grave, considering wonder, which gradually broke into a sense of fun; and then she laughed, as she did not often laugh.

Apparently Mr. Linden was well enough pleased with such answer to his words, for he not only made no attempt to stop her, but even remarked that it was good to be of a sympathizing disposition.

The day passed as usual; only of late it had got to be Faith's habit to spend a good deal of time shut up in her room. It had never been her habit before. But now, after going through her early household duties, of which Faith had plenty, she used to be out of sight often for an hour before dinner; unless when the dinner required just that hour of her attention. Nothing was left behind her to call her down. Her dairy, her bread and cake, her pies and cream-cheeses, her dinner preparations — whatever the things might be — were all ready for the day's wants; and then Faith was gone. After dinner it was still more surely the same. Yet though all this was true, it was so quietly and unobtrusively true that Mrs. Derrick had hardly observed it.

It happened this afternoon that Faith lingered upstairs, —

not until teatime, but until she heard her mother call. Reuben Taylor wanted to see her. He was at the gate.

"I didn't want to disturb you, Miss Faith. I told Mrs. Derrick so. It's only some clams, — which I thought maybe you'd like," said Reuben modestly. "I left 'em in the kitchen."

"Thank you, Reuben — I like them very much. Do you feel better than you did yesterday?"

"Yes, ma'am —" said Reuben rather slowly, — "I felt a great deal better last night."

"And to-day — don't you?"

"Yes, ma'am," Reuben answered as before.

"But not so well as last night? What's the matter, Reuben?"

"Didn't you hear what they did last night, ma'am?"

"To be sure I did, but what has made you feel worse to-day?"

"Why you know, ma'am," said Reuben, "last night I forgot all about everybody but Mr. Linden. But oh Miss Faith! I just wish you could have been in school to-day for one minute! — when Mr. Linden came in! You see," said Reuben, excitement conquering reserve, "the boys were all there — there wasn't one of 'em late, and every one had a sprig of basswood in his hat and in his buttonhole. And we all kept our hats on till he got in, and stood up to meet him (though *that* we do always) and then we took off our hats together and gave him such a shout! — You know, Miss Faith," added Reuben with a smile both expressive and sweet, "basswood's a kind of linden."

"And what did Mr. Linden do?" said Faith with a smile of her own that very well reflected Reuben's.

"He didn't say much," said Reuben, — "he *looked* a good deal."

"Well, you foolish boy," said Faith gently, "don't you feel well now, after all that? What's the matter?"

A heavy, shoe-leathery step came down the street — it was Squire Deacon. Reuben knew who it was before the Squire

came near, for he flushed up, and for a moment stood with his back resolutely turned towards the gate; then with an air as resolute, but different, he turned round and bowed as courteously as he knew how — far more so than the Squire did to him; for the combination of Faith and Reuben did not seem to fall pleasantly upon Squire Deacon's organs of vision; nor indeed could he have quite forgotten last night.

"Reuben, come in," said Faith touching his shoulder and smiling, — "I want to speak to you. But first answer my question — why don't you feel quite well now? You ought, Reuben."

"Yes, Miss Faith — I know I ought, — at least I oughtn't to feel just as I do," Reuben answered. "Mr. Linden told me so to-day."

"Then why do you feel so?" Faith asked with increased earnestness.

Reuben coloured and hesitated.

"Folks vex me —" he said in a low voice. "And — and Mr. Linden says I love him too well if I'm not willing to let him go when God pleases. And I know it's true — but —" and Reuben followed Faith into the house without another word.

"What do you mean about Mr. Linden's going?"

"Just that, ma'am," said Reuben simply. "Because we can't make ourselves feel well by thinking things are going just as we want 'em to — he says that's not strong enough ground to rest on."

"But does he talk of going away, Reuben?"

"O no! Miss Faith I never heard him, — he only talked so to me because of what other folks said."

"Well," said Faith with a change of tone, "you're a foolish boy. You come and see me whenever you get feeling bad again. Folks can't hurt Mr. Linden. Now look here — Wait a minute, will you!" —

Faith ran upstairs; speedily came down again with a little blue-covered book in her hand.

"Is this the arithmetic you study?" she said softly, coming close to him.

Reuben took the book with some surprise in his face.

"Yes, ma'am, this is the one." And he looked up at her as if to ask, what next.

"How far have you gone?"

"I am through this now," said Reuben, "but some of the others are here — and here."

"Then you can tell me," said Faith. She turned over to a certain page, far on in the book too, and putting it into Reuben's hands, said quietly,

"I am studying it, and I cannot make anything of this. Do you remember how it was explained?"

"The book's wrong," said Reuben, after a glance at it, — "I remember, Miss Faith. See — it ought to be so — and so —" Reuben went on explaining. "All the books we could get here were just like it, and Mr. Linden said if he found any more mistakes he would send to Quilipeak and get good ones. He shewed us how this ought to be."

"That's it!" said Faith. "Thank you, Reuben. And you needn't tell anybody I asked you about it."

Reuben looked a little surprised again, but he said "No, ma'am," and made his bow.

It was Faith's turn to be surprised then, for stepping into the tea-room to look at the clock, she found not only the clock but Mr. Linden, — the former ticking sundry minutes past teatime, the latter enjoying the sunset clouds and his own reflections, and (possibly) his book. Mrs. Derrick, favouring the atmosphere of the little wood fire, which had burnt itself out to coals and ashes, sat at one corner of the hearth, taking up the stitches round the heel of her stocking; which precarious operation engrossed her completely. Mr. Linden however looked up, and took in the whole of the little picture before him. Apparently the picture was pleasant, for he smiled.

Faith's look was startled.

"I am late!" she said with a compunctious glance at the clock. And as soon as it could be made the tea came in

smoking. As Faith took her seat at the table she put her question.

"When did you come in, Mr. Linden?"

"About a quarter of an hour before you did."

"By which way?"

"Why! — by the door. It is simpler than the window."

The next few seconds seemed to be employed by Faith in buttering bread and eating it, but in reality they were used for carrying on a somewhat hurried calculation of minutes and distances which brought the colour in her cheeks to a hue of pretty richness.

"Did I run over anybody in my way?" asked Mr. Linden. "What gives the question its interest?"

"I had thought you were out," said Faith quietly.

"I know a shorter way to the store than you do," said Mr. Linden with equal quietness.

"To the store!" said Faith, eye and lip quite putting quietness out of the question.

"Yes, I found your footprints there the other day, and I have been wanting to tell you ever since that it is not anything like so far up to my room. Let me recommend that way to you for the future."

Faith's colour was no matter of degrees now, for it rushed over temples and cheek in a flood. And seemed inclined to be a permanency.

"There you may take what you like," he went on, with a smile that was both amused and encouraging, "and I shall be none the wiser — unless you tell me yourself. If you do tell me, I shall be very glad. Now Miss Faith — what shall we do about Judge Harrison?"

Faith hesitated, and struggled perhaps, for it did not seem very easy to speak with that deep flush on her brow; and then she said rather low,

"I am not ungrateful, Mr. Linden."

"Neither am I — but this proposal of his gives me some trouble. I think if he would have all the fun, without any of the shewing off, it would answer every good purpose and

avoid all the bad ones. And if you will intimate as much to your mother, Miss Faith, and persuade her to convey the information to Judge Harrison, it will perhaps be the best way of reply. Of course as trustee he has still the right of doing as he likes."

"Mother, do you hear?" said Faith, "or do you want me to repeat it?"

"No, child," — said her mother abstractedly; "I didn't hear, to be sure, — how should I? Faith — what do you suppose makes Cindy break the noses off all our milk pitchers?"

This was an irresistible question. Faith's own face came back, and during the rest of supper-time she was like herself, only with a shade more than was usual upon her brow and manner.

The short September day had little twilight to lengthen it out. The cool western horizon still outshone the setting stars with its clear light, but in the east and overhead others came out, 'silently, one by one.' Mr. Linden went to take his evening walk, Faith to light the lamp in the parlour, watched and gazed at by her mother the while.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick, "what makes you stay upstairs so? I never thought of it till I went to call you to see Reuben — but seems to me you are up there a great deal."

Faith smiled a little and also looked grave, as she was putting on the shade of the lamp.

"Yes, mother" — she said, — "I am."

"What for, pretty child?" said her mother fondly.

Faith was pretty, in the look with which she answered this appeal. Her smile dropped its gravity, and only love came in to make the confession.

"Mother, I am trying to learn. I want to be wiser."

"Learn!" said Mrs. Derrick in utter astonishment, and rousing out of her resting position. "Trying to *learn*, child?"

"Yes, mother — what about it? I don't know anything; and I want to know — a great deal!"

"Why you know everything now!" said Mrs. Derrick. "What don't you know, Faith? — *I* should like to!"

Faith smiled.

"Mother, I don't know anything!" — and then she added more brightly, "I've begun with arithmetic, for one thing."

"Arithmetic!" said Mrs. Derrick; and she paused, and leaned back in her chair, rocking gently to and fro, with a shade of soberness stealing over her face.

"You never did have much chance," — she said at length, "because I couldn't give it to you then. My heart was broke, Faith, and I couldn't bear to have you out of my sight for a minute. But somehow I thought you knew everything." And she sat still once more, looking at Faith as if trying to reinstate herself in her old opinion. Nor altogether without success; for with a little smile coming over her face, Mrs. Derrick added,

"You won't be any sweeter — learn as much as you will, child, — you needn't think it;" and the rockers would have certainly come into play again if Cindy had not opened the door and claimed attention.

"I s'pose likely you don't want to go down to Widder Stamp's?" she said. "Cause she wants you to come. I'm free to confess she's got the high-strikes wonderful."

"Mother," said Faith, giving her one or two kisses as Mrs. Derrick rose to prove the contrary of Cindy's supposition, "I shall be a great deal *happier*; — and I am getting along nicely."

Which sent Mrs. Derrick off in triumph. But when she was gone, Faith did not take her basket of stockings, nor yet her arithmetic; but sat down by the table with her head in her hands and sat very still. Still, until Mr. Linden came in, laid one paper on the table at her side, and sat down to read another. Faith's darning-needle came into play then, and worked quick and silently. Mr. Linden glanced towards it as he laid down his paper.

"I see you evaded my question last night," he said, — "there could not be such a *constant* supply, if there were not also a constant demand."

"Mr. Linden," said Faith, her colour a little raised and her voice changing somewhat, — "I want to ask you something — if you are not busy about anything."

"I am not — but you might ask just as freely if I were."

"I couldn't," said Faith. She drew her hand out of her stocking and put her thimble on the table.

"Mr. Linden," she said without looking at him, — "a while ago, when you were speaking of faith and a cloudy day, and I told you I wasn't like that, — you said I must read the Bible then, and do what that said. I have been trying to do it." —

Shading his eyes with his hand, he looked at her — as if waiting to hear more.

"And I don't understand it," she said. — "I don't know how to get on."

"Do you mean, with the Bible? Is it *that* you do not understand?"

"I don't understand some things — I don't know exactly what I ought to do."

"In what respect? — where is the difficulty? Some things in the Bible you never will understand, perhaps, in this world, and others you must learn by degrees."

"I don't understand exactly what makes a Christian — and I want to be one."

It was spoken low, and timidly; but Faith was in earnest. Mr. Linden sat silent a minute, without changing his position.

"A Christian is one, who trusting in Christ as his only Saviour, thenceforth obeys him as his only King."

Faith hesitated and thought. "I don't understand," she said folding her hands, "— about the trusting."

"Suppose there was something you wanted done — too hard for your strength but not for mine, — would you know how to trust it in my hands?"

She bowed her head and said, "Yes!"

"Suppose I consented to do it only upon condition that for the rest of your life my will and pleasure should be your only rule of action, — would the great work still be yours or mine?"

"Why, yours," she said, still looking at him.

"Cannot you see Christ — standing between God and man, offering his own blood where justice demands ours, and with his perfect righteousness covering our imperfect obedience? So 'that God may be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' Can you apply any words? Can you see that Christ only is 'mighty to save'? — Are you willing to trust yourself in his hands?"

Faith dropped her eyes for a minute or two, but the lines of her face were changing.

"I know what you mean now," she said slowly. "I couldn't see it before." Then with a little smile she went on — "Yes, Mr. Linden, I am willing. But what must I do?"

"'Only believe —'" he answered. "Do what you say you are willing to do."

"But," said Faith, looking at him with a face which certainly spoke her near the 'little child' character which Christians do bear, — "there must be something else. I must not be like what I have been. I want to know what I ought to *do*."

"Christ's own words tell you better than I can, — 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me' — that is the description of a Christian on earth. And then it follows — 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'"

There was silence; and then Faith said,

"But how am I to follow him?"

"How did the people do to whom he said those words when he was on earth?"

"I don't know!"

"'They arose, and left all, and followed him.'"

"Well, Mr. Linden?" —

"It is just such a following that we are called to now — only that it must be in heart and life instead of actual footsteps. Just so must we rise up from doing our own will and pleasure, fix our eyes upon Christ, and follow him!"

"But how are we to know — how am *I* to know," said Faith, "what *I* ought to do?"

"Study Christ's summing up of the ten commandments, — does not that cover the whole ground? And then — do every little duty as it comes to hand. If we are truly ready to do God's will, he will send us work, — or if not —

'They also serve, who only stand and wait.'"

Faith looked an earnest, wistful, sorrowful look at him.

"But then," she said, — "I don't do anything well — how can I know that I am right? You know what you said — of the two roads only one led to the shore. I keep thinking of that — ever since."

"A traveller in the right road," said Mr. Linden, "may walk with very weak and unsteady pace, — yet he knows which way his face is set. Which way is yours?"

Faith's face was in her hands. But Mrs. Derrick's step just then sounding at the front door, she sprang away before it could reach the parlour.

CHAPTER VIII.

The decision of Mr. Linden on the school question was duly communicated to Judge Harrison; and the time fixed was Thursday, the fifth of October. The place chosen, after much care, was the Judge's own house and grounds adjoining, which were spacious enough, and afforded good opportunity for setting tables and also for spreading them. So all that was fixed; and all Pattaquasset was a tip-toe; and Mr. Linden submitted to what he could not help, with as good a grace as he might. And September was sliding off into October with the gentlest, sunniest, softliest grace.

With much the same sort of grace Faith Derrick walked up and down in her mother's household; from the dairy where she made her butter, to Mr. Linden's room which it was her care to keep in order; and where she might if she chose amuse herself with Mr. Linden's books. If she did, it was unknown to their owner; he surely found every volume lying where he left it. There was chance enough for Faith, in his long absences from the house; and the books offered temptations. There were a good many of them, stowed in old-fashioned corner and window cupboards; good editions, in good bindings, and an excellent very choice selection of subjects and authors. There were books in various languages of which Faith could make nothing — but sighs; in her own mother tongue there were varieties of learning and literature enough to distract her. All however that the owner could know of other hands about his books, was that there was no dust upon them.

Perhaps he had a mind to know more — or that there should be more to be known; for about this time two remarkable things happened. One was, that Faith found a little French book ensconced among the stockings in her basket, — and the very next morning as Mr. Linden was setting off for school, he stopped at the threshold and inquired —

"Miss Faith — whereabouts are you in Prescott?"

That same colour flushed in Faith's face; it did not rise to her temples this time, but glowed richly in her cheeks. She looked down and up, and down; words seemed confounded in their utterance.

"You do not mean that you have finished it already?" he said with an excellent look of astonishment.

"I have almost," — said Faith. "Mr. Linden, how could you tell? — I don't know what makes me do so!" she said putting both hands to her cheeks, — "there's no shame in it."

"I didn't suppose there was," he said smiling, and closed the door.

Very oddly, in spite of morning duties, Faith's next move was to go to her basket, pull out that little French book and examine it all over inside and out. Not one word of it could she read, not one sign of it did she know; what was the meaning of its place in her basket? Faith pondered that question probably while her cheeks were coming back to their usual tint; then the book was slipped back again and she hurried away to help her mother with the dishes.

"You needn't come, child," said Mrs. Derrick, — "what do you think I'll make of such a handful of things as that? To be sure Cindy's cleaning up to-day, but I'm pretty smart, yet. Go off and study arithmetic if you want to. Have you got through that yet?"

"Almost through, mother," Faith answered smiling.

"Well why don't you go and finish?" said her mother.

"Mayn't I finish these first?" said Faith, through whose fingers and the towel the cups and saucers slipped with a dexterity that was, to say the least of it, pretty. "Why mother, you were not so keen after arithmetic the other day."

"Keen after it!" said Mrs. Derrick, — "la, child, I don't pretend to be keen. But I never could bear to see a thing half done, — I'd rather do it twice over."

There was something else running in Faith's mind; for after abstractedly setting down one after another several saucers, polished from the hot water and huckaback, she dropped her towel and flung both arms round her mother's neck.

"Mother! — there is one thing I want you to do — I want you to be a Christian!"

There was persuasion in the soft head that nestled against her, if Faith's words lacked it.

To the words her mother gave no answer, but she returned the caress with interest; wrapping Faith in her arms, and drawing her down to the next chair, as if — literally — she could not stand that.

"Pretty child!" she said — and more than one tear fell upon Faith's bright hair, — "you're the best child that ever was! — and always were!"

"No, mother," said Faith kissing her. — "But will you?"

"I don't know!" said Mrs. Derrick, — "that's what your father used to say, Faith, — and I used to think I'd like to, to please him, — but somehow I never did."

"Never wished it for your own sake, dear mother?"

"Yes — sometimes — when I saw him die —" said Mrs. Derrick. "Hush child — don't say another word to me now, for I can't bear it." And giving Faith an embrace which took off all thought of roughness from her words, Mrs. Derrick rose up and went about her dishes again.

And Faith tried to do as much; but the dropping tears were too fast for her towel; her hand sought in vain to forbid their coming; she laid down her work and went away.

Truth however is always at one with itself, and so is right feeling, and so is duty. Faith as well as her mother had plenty of business on hand that morning; and it was not long before she was as hard at work in the kitchen as if there were no other interests in the world. There was bread to make. That was done. There was an elaborate chicken pie to concoct for dinner, which Faith would not leave to her mother today. There was a certain kind of muffins which Mrs. Derrick suggested Mr. Linden would be apt to like, and which they had never had since he was in Pattaquasset. To hear was to obey, and Faith compounded the muffins. Then fresh yeast must be made, and Faith always did that. Let it not be thought that Mrs. Derrick was idle while thus indicating floury fields of exertion to her daughter. Very far from it. There was all the house and all the rest of the dinner to see to; besides Cindy, who was one woman's work. The butcher was to be met, and farm questions settled with the farmer; and Mrs. Derrick was still deep in vegetables when Faith quitted the kitchen. How much time she had left for study before dinner it doesn't appear.

After dinnèr, this day, there was small study chance — or at least small chance to get books; for it was Wednesday, — and Wednesday was in every Pattaquasset school a half holiday. Indeed that arrangement of things extended beyond the schools; and on this particular Wednesday, Mrs. Derrick devoted the holiday time to a far-off neighbour — declaring that she "felt like a good long walk." And after her departure the dreaminess of a warm fall afternoon settled down upon the house and its inhabitants. Faith sat sewing by the parlour window, or reading — stealthily; for Mr. Linden with his book sat in the porch not three feet from her; but it is not too much to say that neither made great progress. Who could read or work —· or think — vigilantly, in that hazy sunshine? — the very bees took a siesta on the wing, and rocked to and fro in the soft air.

About the middle of the afternoon a small white-headed boy was seen revolving down the main street of Pattaquasset. I say revolving — for the slight suggestion of a small stone in the road — or a spot of particular dustiness — was enough to make the boy break the monotony of his walk with a somerset; by which style of progress he at last arrived at Mrs. Derrick's door, entered the gate and came up the steps. There he paused and gazed at Mr. Linden.

"What is your name?" inquired that gentleman, with the benevolent idea of setting the boy's thoughts in motion in a straight line.

"Charles twelf'" replied the boy promptly.

"Charles twelfth!" said Mr. Linden. "Are there eleven more of you?"

The boy put his finger in his mouth but brought forth no answer.

"Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "are you the planet which has attracted this small star out of its usual orbit?"

Faith came to the door.

"Who are you, little fellow?" said she, eyeing the dusty white head.

"Who be you?" said the boy.

"The centre of your solar system at present," said Mr. Linden. "Is that the way satellites generally ask questions?"

"What a queer man!" said the boy looking at Mr. Linden.

"What a queer boy —" said that gentleman gravely.

"What do you want?" said Faith, biting her lips and laughing at both of them.

The boy gazed at her, but he also gazed at the scraper! — and the attraction of that was irresistible. Down went his white head, and over went his dusty feet, and then Charles twelfth was himself again.

"My ma's kep' your ma to supper," he said. "And she says you may come too, if you want ter — and bring *him*. We've got lots o' pies." And stimulated by this recollection, the boy turned without delay and began his revolutions homeward. Faith ran down the two or three porch steps and laid hold of the little invader.

"Here! You Charles twelfth! — who are you, and where does your ma' live?"

"She lives down to our house."

"Where's that?"

"Down the woody road —" said the boy, — "next after you come to Capting Samp's blackberry field. There's sunflowers in front."

"Then you are Mrs. Seacomb's boy? Very well," said Faith, letting him go. "Mr. Linden, there is an invitation for you."

"Is there a carriage road into Sweden? or do we walk?" he replied.

"Sweden?" — said Faith, — "it is in the woods, two or three miles from here. A woman lives there — the widow of a man that used to sail with my father. My father was captain of a ship, Mr. Linden. Mr. Seacomb was one of his mates, and very fond of him; and we go to see Mrs. Seacomb once in a while. I don't think, perhaps, you would like it. It's a pretty ride."

"That is a kind of ride I do like."

"But I don't know whether you would like it all. If you say so, I will have up the wagon."

"Thank you — *that* I should not like. I prefer to have it up myself, Miss Faith — if you will have up your bonnet."

Faith's face gave way at that, and the bonnet and the wagon were up accordingly.

The way led first down the high road, bordered with gardens and farms and the houses of the village — if village it were called, where the neighbours looked at each other's distant windows across wide tracts of meadow, orchards and grain fields. The road was reasonably dusty, in the warm droughts of September; nevertheless the hedgerows that grew thick in many places shewed gay tufts of autumn flowering; and the mellow light lay on every wayside object and sober distance like the reflection from a butterfly's wing. Except the light, all changed when they got into the woody road.

It was woody indeed! — except where it was grassy; and woods and grass played hide and seek with each other. The grass-grown road, its thicker grass borders — where bright fall flowers raised their proud little heads; the old fence, broken down in places, where bushes burst through and half filled the gap; bright hips on the wild rosebushes, tufts of yellow fern leaves, brilliant handfuls of red and yellow which here a maple and there a pepperidge held out over the road; the bushy, bosquey, look which the uncut undergrowth gave the wood on either hand; the gleams of soft green light, the bands of shadow, the deeper thickets where the eye looked twice and came back unsatisfied, — over all the blue sky, with forest leaves for a border. Such was the woody road that afternoon. Flocks of little birds of passage flitted and twittered about their night's lodging, or came down to feast on wintergreen or cedar berries; and Mrs. Derrick's old horse walked softly on, as if he knew no one was in a hurry.

"'With what a glory comes and goes the year'!" Mr. Linden said.

"And stays all the while, don't it?" said Faith rather timidly and after an instant's hesitation.

"Yes, in a sort — though to my fancy the other seasons have rather beauty and splendour, while autumn keeps the glory for itself."

"I think it is glorious all the year round," said Faith; — "though to be sure," she added with a sudden check, "perhaps I don't use the word right."

"Yes, it is glorious, — but I think 'glorious' and 'glory' have drifted a little apart upon the tide of human speech. Glory, always seems to my mind a warm, glowing, effulgent thing, — but ice-peaks may be glorious. The old painters encircled the heads of their saints with a 'glory' — and you could not imagine that a cold light."

Faith listened, with the eyes of one first seeing into the world of wonder and beauty hidden from common vision. She did not answer, till her thoughts came back to the road they were travelling, and catching her breath a little she said,

"*This* isn't a cold light."

"No, truly. And just so far as the saints on earth walk in a cold light, so far, I think, their light is less glorious."

"I don't see how they can," — said Faith timidly.

"They do — sometimes, — standing aloof like those ice-peaks. You can see the white garments, but no glory transfigures them. Such a face as Stephen's, Miss Faith, is worth a journey to see."

Faith thought so; wondered how many such faces he had seen. Her meditations plunged her too deep for words.

"What are you musing about? — if I may ask," Mr. Linden said presently.

She coloured but answered, "I was thinking what one must be, to have a face like Stephen's."

"That is the promise, you know — 'from glory to glory.' 'From grace to glory' must come first. 'What one must *be*' — yes, that is it. But it is good to measure the promises now and then."

Faith laid that last remark up in her heart, enshrining it in gold, as it were. But she said nothing.

"How is it with you?" he said turning his eyes full upon her, — "you have not told me lately. Are the clouds all gone?"

Her look met his, wistful, and simple as her answer.

"I see the light through." —

"'Unto the perfect-day'!" Mr. Linden said; his smile — slight as it was — bringing a sort of illumination with it. After a few minutes he turned to her again.

"Miss Faith, one whom Christ has called into his army should wear his uniform."

"What, sir?" — she said, the colour starting readily.

"With the private vows of allegiance, there should be also a public profession."

"Yes," — she said, "I suppose so. — I am willing — I am ready."

Timid, modest, even shrinking as she was, more in view of the subject than of her adviser, her face was as frank as the day. His hand quitted the reins a moment, taking hers and giving it a sort of 'right-hand-of-fellowship' clasp, glad and warm and earnest, as was his look.

"I am not going to ask you any more questions," he said, — "you will tell me if there are any you wish answered."

Her "Thank you" was a little breathless.

For a while the old horse jogged on in his easy way, through the woods and the fall flowers and the sunny glow; and the eyes of the two travellers seemed to be busy therewith. Then Faith said with a little timid touch upon her voice,

"Mr. Linden — I suppose it was you that put a little green book in my basket last night?"

"Jumping at conclusions again!" he said. "What sort of a little green book was it?"

"I don't know! I suppose you can tell me."

"Do you suppose I will?"

"Why not? What did you expect me to do with it, Mr. Linden?"

"Find out what sort of a book it is."

"You know I can't read a word of it," said Faith rather low.

"Look at that old house," said Mr. Linden.

They were passing a cleared field or two, one of which seemed yet under cultivation and shewed corn stalks and pumpkin vines, but the other was in that poverty-stricken state described by the proverb as 'I once had.' The house was a mere skeleton. Clapboards, indeed, there were still, and shingles; but doors and windows had long since been removed — by man or Time, — and through the open spaces you could see here a cupboard door, and there a stairway, and there a bit of partition wall with its faded high-coloured paper. No remnant of furniture — no rag of old clothes or calico; but in the dooryard a few garden flowers still struggled to keep their place, among daisies, thistles and burdocks. The little field was bordered with woodland, and human voice or face there was none. The sunbeams which shone so bright on the tinted trees seemed powerless here; the single warm ray that shot through one of the empty window frames fell mournfully on the cold hearthstone.

"Yes," said Faith. — "I don't know who ever lived there. It has stood so a good while."

The road grew more solitary still after that, passing on where the trees came close upon either hand, and arched their branches overhead, casting a deep and lonely shadow. The flowers dwindled, the briars and rank grass increased.

"As to 'Le Philosophe sous les toits,' Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, touching the horse with his whip, "there are just two things to be said. In the first place — with the help of another book or two which are not beyond reach — you may make his acquaintance quite comfortably by yourself. In the second — no, I shall not tell you the second, — that you may find out by yourself too. There is Charles twelfth — and all his subjects one might judge."

For on Captain Samp's blackberry hill — albeit blackberries were bygone things — a troop, a flock of children were scattered up and down, picking flowers. Golden rod and asters and 'moonshine,' filled the little not-too-clean hands, and briars and wild roses combed the 'unkempt' hair somewhat roughly. Whiteheaded youngsters all of them, looking (but for small patterns of blue calico and nankeen) not unlike a drove of little pigs. Next appeared an imposing array of sunflowers, below which prince's feather waved in crimson splendour, and the little brown capital of 'Sweden' stood revealed. Or I should say, partially; for the house stood in the deepest corner of the shade, just where the road took a sharp turn towards the sunlight; and Mr. Linden alighted and tied his horse to a tree, with little fear that anything would happen to him unless the darkness put him to sleep.

"Charles twelfth has the best of it just now, Miss Faith," he said as he opened the gate for her. "Why do people build houses where they cannot see the sun!"

They were met at the door by Mrs. Seacomb.

"Do tell!" she said — "why if this aint you! But what made you come so late? and how slow your horse did come when he was about it. I've been watchin' you this age. Well Faith — I declare — you're as pretty as a posie! And this is the teacher I s'pose — Guess likely you haint been down this way afore, sir, — it's a good ways, and the road's lonesome, but it's a fine place when you're here — so retired and shady."

All Mr. Linden's command of countenance only enabled him to answer the last remark with a strong affirmative.

"Yes sir," said Mrs. Seacomb, "it is; and there's a good many of the trees is evergreens, so the shade never goes off. I do s'pose, if I could keep the children more to home they wouldn't get nigh so brown as they do; but if I was to run out in the lot and whip 'em home every half hour they'd be back again afore I could count one. Now Genevievy — she does stay rouud under the trees a good deal, but then she's fond of flowers. She'll be real glad to see you Faith, and so'll your

mother" — and Mrs. Seacomb at last got her visiters into the parlour.

The parlour was as brown as the rest of the house. The visiters had not time to remark more particularly; for their attention was claimed by a tall girl of about Faith's age, with a loosely built, strong jointed frame, in as marked contrast as possible to the clean outline and soft angles of the other. She shook hands very cordially with Faith, but made a reverence to the 'teacher.'

"Won't you take a chair, sir," she said, setting one for the gentleman. "Aint it an age since we've looked at you, Faith! Your mother's been here a long spell. Ma' *was* proud to see her come it. You haint been here, seems to me, ever before!"

"How do you do, Genevieve?"

"I'm respectable well. Can't do nothin' uncommon, you know, down in this 'eclusion. I guess it's as good to see company as blackberries. We don't get it though. — I hope you don't mind a lonely sitiwation, sir?" The last words with deep gravity and a bending head.

"It agrees well with a contemplative mind," replied the gentleman, resolving that the young lady should not talk 'high english' alone.

"It does!" said Genevieve admiringly, taking him all in with her eyes. "There is always something to look at to make you contemplate. — Then you don't think it an objection, sir, to live so far away from society as this?"

"I have lived further away from society than this," said Mr. Linden. "I have seem regions of country, Miss Seacomb, where you could not even hear of anybody but yourself."

"I declare! — And war'n't it awful still, sir?"

"It was beautiful, still," said Mr. Linden.

"I reckon it was!"

At this juncture Charles twelfth made his appearance, and Mr. Linden at once turned to him —

"Well sir — how are the Turks?"

To which Charles twelfth, being taken much by surprise, replied,

"They're pretty well."

"Genevievy," said her mother, "if you'll make yourself agreeable, I'll go hurry tea afore the rest of the children comes. They *will* all come to table, and there's so many." And Mrs. Derrick as in duty bound, followed her to help.

"I'll go tell 'em!" said Charles twelfth as Mrs. Seacomb went out.

"No you will not" — said Mr. Linden, — "you will not go out of the house again till I give you leave. Why don't you come to Sunday school and learn to behave yourself?"

"What else?" — said Charles twelfth.

"What else!" said Mr. Linden, — "that will take you some time. Afterwards you will learn all the lessons your teacher gives you."

"Who'll he be?" said Charles twelfth coming a little nearer. "You?"

"No indeed," said Mr. Linden, "I have quite enough to do now. I dare say this lady will take you into her class — if you ask her politely."

It was worth while to see Faith's face now, for the little stir and the flush and the sweet gravity that was in it. Not so much as a glance went to Mr. Linden, but leaning forward towards the young enemy of Peter the Great, she said in her sweet tones,

"Will you come?"

Charles twelfth looked up at her rather earnestly, though his finger was in his mouth the while; and then having ended his scrutiny gave a grave little nod of assent, and moved round and stood at her side.

"Look here," said Faith, — "don't you want to shew me how the sunflowers grow in your garden?"

"They bain't mine —" said Charles twelfth. — "I'll shew you my house — if he'll let me go."

That difficulty being got over, Charles twelfth trotted out of the front door, and on through the long grass, to a remarkable edifice of clam shells, broken earthenware, moss and corn cobs, which was situated close by the fence. Faith commented

and asked questions, till she had made herself slightly familiar to the young woodsman's mind; and then it was agreed that he should come Sunday morning bright and early to Mrs. Derrick's and he and Faith would go to Sunday school together. By the time this arrangement was thoroughly entered into, the summons came to tea.

"Now do just set down and make yourselves at home," said Mrs. Seacomb, "and eat as if you were home too. Faith," she added in a good sized whisper — "I did like to forgot all about it! — and your mother could have telled me, too, but you'll do just as well, — does he always take cold pork and potatoes to his supper?"

Faith's eyes involuntarily opened; then as the meaning of this appeal broke upon her she answered with a very decided "No, ma'am."

"'Cause we've got some handy," Mrs. Seacomb said. "Now Mr. Simpson, he staid with us a spell, and he couldn't do without it — if I had pound cake and plum cake and mince pie for supper, it made no differ — and if there warn't but one cold potato in the house it made none either; he wanted that just the same. To be sure he was easy suited. And I didn't know but all school teachers was the same way. I never had much experience of 'em. Genevievy — just lock the front door and then the children can't get in, — the back door is locked. I do take to peace and quiet!"

"Is Charles twelfth much like his brothers and sisters, ma'am?" said Mr. Linden.

"Well no —" said Mrs. Seacomb, dealing out blackberry jam, — "he always was an uncommon child. The rest's all real sponsible, but there's none of 'em alike but Americus Vespucus. — It's fresh, Faith — the children picked the blackberries in Captain Samp's lot. — Charles twelfth does act sometimes as if he was helped. I thought he took a turn awhile ago, to behave like the rest — but he's reacted." And having emptied the dish of jam Mrs. Seacomb began upon the cheese.

"Which is Americus?" said Faith. "Is he older or younger than Charles twelfth Mrs. Seacomb?"

"Well he's older," said Mrs. Seacomb; — "*that's* him," she added, as a loud rattling of the back door was followed in an incredibly short space of time by a similar rattling at the front, after which came the clatter of various sticks and clods at the window.

"I guess you won't care about seein' him nearer," said Mrs. Seacomb, stirring her tea composedly. "Only don't nobody open the door — I do love peace and quiet. They won't break the window, 'cause they know they'd catch it if they did."

"Children *is* a plague, I do s'pose," remarked Genevieve. "Is your tea agreeable, sir?"

Which question Mr. Linden waived by asking another, and the meal proceeded with a peace and quietness which suited no ideas but Mrs. Seacomb's. At last tea was over; the ladies put on their bonnets again, and the old horse being roused from his meditations, the party set forward on their pleasant way home.

Doubly pleasant now, for the sun was just setting; the air was fresher, and the glow of the sunset colours put a new 'glory' upon all the colours of earth. And light and shadow made witching work of the woody road as long as the glow lasted. Then the colours faded, the shadows spread; grey gathered where orange and brown had been; that glory was gone; and then it began to be shewn, little by little, as the blue also changed for grey, that there is "another glory of the stars." And then presently, above the trees that shaded Mrs. Seacomb's retreat, the moon rose full and bright and laid her strips of silver under the horse's feet.

Were they all exhausted with their afternoon's work? or was this shifting scene of colour and glory enough to busy their minds? Mr. Linden found his way along the road silently, and the two ladies behind him seemed each to be wrapped in her own thoughts; and moonlight and starlight favoured that, and so on they jogged between the shadowy

walls of trees tipped and shimmering with light, and over those strips of silver on the road. Out of the woods at last, on the broad, full-lit highway; past one farm and house after another, lights twinkling at them from the windows; and then their own door with its moon-lit porch.

The old horse would stand, no fear; the reins were thrown over his back, and the three went in together. As Mrs. Derrick passed on first and the others were left behind in the doorway, Faith turned and held out her hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Linden!" — she said softly.

He took the hand, and inquired gravely, "whether she was taking leave of him for the rest of his natural life?"

Faith's mood had probably not been precisely a merry one when she began; but her low laugh rung through the hall at that, and she ran in.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Simlins stood on his doorstep and surveyed such portion of his fair inheritance as his eye could reach from that point. Barns and outhouses already in good order, Mr. Simlins favoured with a mental coat of paint; fences were put up and gate-posts renewed, likewise in imagination. Imagination went further, and passed from the stores of yellow grain concealed by those yellow clapboards, to the yellow stubble-fields whence they had come; so that on the whole Mr. Simlins took rather a glowing view of things, considering that it was not yet sunrise. The cloudless October sky above his head suggested only that it would be a good day for digging potatoes, — the white frost upon the ground made Mr. Simlins 'guess it was about time to be lookin' after chestnuts.' The twitter of the robins brought to mind the cherries they had stolen, — the exquisite careering of a hawk in the high blue ether, spoke mournfully of a slaughtered chicken: the rising stir of the morning wind said plainly as a wind could (in its elegant language) that 'if it was goin' to blow at *that* rate, it would be plaguey rough goin' after round clams.' With which

reflcction, Mr. Simlins turned about and went in to his early breakfast of pork and potatoes, — only, as he was not a 'teacher,' they were hot and not cold.

Thus pleasantly engaged — discussing his breakfast, — Mr. Simlins was informed by one of his 'help,' that a boy wanted to see him. Which was no uncommon occurrence, for all the boys about Pattaquasset liked Mr. Simlins.

"Just as lieves see him as not," said Mr. Simlins — "if he don't want my breakfast. Come in, there, you!" —

And Dromy Tuck presented himself.

"'Early bird catches the worm,'" said Mr. Simlins. "Don't want my breakfast, Dromy, do you?"

"Had mine afore I started," replied Dromy. "But the thing's here. Mr. Linden says as how we wants your nuts off o' them trees over to Neanticut — and he says if you *don't* want 'em, why it'll fit, he says. And if you do, why you may keep 'em — that's all."

"What's Mr. Linden goin' to do with the nuts, s'pos'n he gets 'em?"

"*He* aint agoin' to get 'em," said Dromy — "it's us; — us and him. You see we did somethin' to please him, and so now he said as how he'd like to do somethin' to please us, if he only knowed what it was. And there wa'n't a boy of the hull on 'em as didn't say he'd rather go after nuts than any other livin' thing whatsomedever."

"And now I s'pose you're askin' for them particular nuts to please me. It's a round game we're on," said Mr. Simlins. "How're you goin' to get to Neanticut? same way Jack went up his bean? — won't pay."

"He didn't tell —" said Dromy. "He don't say everything to oncet, commonly."

"When 'you goin'?"

"Don' know, sir. Mr. Linden said as how we'd better go afore the nutsdid. And Saturday aint fur off."

"Saturday — well! You tell Mr. Linden, if he'll send Reuben Taylor here Saturday morning, he can take the big wagon; it'll hold the hull on ye, and I guess I'll do without

the team; and if he wants to go into the old house and make a fire in case you want something to eat afore you get home, there's not a soul in it and no wood nother — but you can pick it up; and I'll give Reuben the key. Now don't you splice the two ends o' that together by the way."

Great was the stir in a certain stratum of Pattaquasset that day! Many and startling were the demands for pies, cheese, and gingerbread, to be answered on the ensuing Saturday. Those good housewives who had no boys at school or elsewhere, thought it must be 'real good fun' to help them get ready for such a frolic, — those who *had* boys — wished they had none! As to the rest, the disturbance spread a little (as disturbances are wont) from its proper sphere of action. Two boys even invaded Mrs. Derrick's peaceful dwelling, and called down Faith from conquering Peru. These were Reuben Taylor and Joe Deacon; for Joe with a slight variation of the popular adage, considered that 'once a scholar, always a scholar.' Reuben seemed inclined on his part to leave the present business in Joe's hands, but a sharp nudge from that young gentleman's elbow admonished him not only to speak but to speak quickly. Reuben modestly preferred his modest request, guiltless of any but the most innocent arrangement of his words.

"We boys are all going over to Neanticut nutting, next Saturday, Miss Faith," he said, "and we thought as Mr. Linden was going, maybe you'd like to go too — and we'd all enjoy it a great deal more."

"There ain't room in the wagon," put in Joe — "but I s'pose you kin fix that."

"Joe!" said Reuben flushing up. "There's plenty of room, Miss Faith — there isn't one of us that wouldn't find it, somehow. I could walk easy enough, I know that."

Faith flushed up too on her part a little, unconsciously; and asked who else was going.

"Sam *aint*" — said Joe, as if that was all he cared about.

"Only the boys, Miss Faith," said Reuben with another glance at his comrade. "But it's a pretty place over there, —

and so's the ride. There's room for Mrs. Derrick too if she'd like it," Reuben added, — "I suppose we shall be gone all day."

"It's very good of you to come and ask me, both of you," said Faith, evidently in perplexity; — "and I should like to go dearly if I can, Reuben — but I am afraid I can't. I am glad if the wagon's big enough to hold you all without me. You'll have a great time."

"You may say that!" said Joe — while Reuben looked down, disappointed.

"We didn't know whether you would," he said — "but Mr. Linden said you wouldn't be displeased at our asking. We asked him first, Miss Faith — or we shouldn't have made so free. And you shall have some of the nuts, anyway!"

A little cheered with which view of the subject, Reuben made his bow, and Joe Deacon whistled after him out of the gate.

Faith looked after them, disappointed too. There was a grave set of the lines of her mouth, and it was with rather a thoughtful face that she looked down the road for a minute. Then remembering the volume of Prescott in her hand, which her finger still kept open, she went up stairs again and set herself down to finish her treasure. Faith's reading-place, it must be known, was no other than a deep window-seat in Mr. Linden's room. That was a large, old-fashioned room, as has been said, with brown wainscottings and corner and window cupboards; and having on two sides a pleasant exposure, the light generally made it a winsome place to look at. Now, in this October weather, it came in mellow and golden from a softened sun and changing foliage; the brown wood and white walls and dark old furniture and rich bindings of books, all mingled in the sunlight to make a rich sunny picture.

There were pictures outside too and pleasant ones. From the south window, straight down the street, the houses and trees and the brown spire of the Methodist church stretched away — roofs and gable ends and the enormous tufty heads

of the elm trees that half hung over them. At the back of these houses, the eye went uninterruptedly over meadows and fields to the belt of woods which skirted at a little distance the line of the shore from the Lighthouse to Barley Point — here and there a break through which a schooner might be seen standing up or down the Sound; elsewhere only its top-sails might be discerned above the woods. The western window took in the break where Barley Point lay; and further on in the southwest a distant glimpse of the Sound, with the little brown line of Monongatesak Point. The lane leading to the shore ran off due west, with houses, gardens, orchards, bordering it and spotting the country generally. A fair country — level and rich — all the range west and northwest was uninterrupted smooth fields; the eye had full sweep to the wide horizon; the dotting of trees, barns and houses, only enriched it, giving the sweet air of peaceful and happy occupation.

Faith's place was the deep low sill, or seat, of that western window. There often Faith's book rested, while on the floor before it the reader sat. This time the book was near finished, and a few more leaves turned over changed the 'near' into 'quite'. Faith stood then considering the books. The name of Prescott on another volume had tempted her, for she had taken it down and considered the title page; before settling to it, Faith laid her hand on one of another set not yet much examined; a set of particular outside beauty. But what was the inside? For Faith stood by the cupboard door, not looking here and there, but leaf by leaf walking into the middle of the book. Faith rested the volume on the shelf and turned over more leaves; and at last dropped down by her window seat, laid the book there, put her cheek on her hand as usual, a cheek already flushed, and lost herself in the very beams of the afternoon sun.

It might have been a dream, it might have been a vision (only that *vision* it was not) — it might have been reality; wrapped up in her book, what should Faith know? Yet when some crisis was turned over with the leaf, and the real world

began to supplant the unreal, Faith started up and looked round. Had she heard a step? a rustling of paper on the table? The door was firmly shut, the shadowy corner near by had lost the sunbeams, but was else unchanged; the table looked just as before — unless — Had there been a letter lying there when she came in? — Faith never could tell.

The door opened now, however, and Mrs. Derrick entered — peering in somewhat anxiously.

"Why here you are, pretty child!" she said, "I began to think you were lost! Mrs. Somers has been here, and so's Miss Harrison, and they wanted to see you ever so much. I don't think that's a good cheese we cut last night, Faith, — I guess I'll cut another."

Faith was an image of innocent guilt; and without daring to ask if it was tea-time, she ran down stairs. Her mother followed and stood by, not with any thought of overseeing but for the pleasure thereof.

"Well child," she said, "are you learning all the world up? What's in the oven now?"

"Don't you think that is good?" —

The question had reference to the freshly cut cheese, of which Faith presented her mother with a small morsel. Mrs. Derrick tasted — critically, but the first topic was the most interesting.

"What's made your cheeks burn?" she said laying her hand softly against the rose-colour. "If you're going to study yourself into a fever, Faith, *I*'m not going to stand by and see it."

"No fear, mother. I forgot myself. Is Mr. Linden come in?"

"He must be — he always is by this time. Miss Harrison says the Doctor's got back, Faith."

Faith took up her cheese and walked in with it. The tea-table stood alone. But the tea hour being come, and Mr. Linden known to be surely there within five minutes of the tea hour, the tea was made — and not a minute too soon.

Faith was not on this occasion talkative, nor anybody else. The meal proceeded rather silently. Spoons spoke in low tones, knives made themselves busy; and Cindy put her head in at the door and withdrew it with the mental ejaculation,

"My! if they baint settin' there yet!"

At this point Mr. Linden spoke. "And so, Miss Faith, you have no fancy for nuts to crack?"

Faith flushed a little and hesitated.

"I didn't say so, Mr. Linden."

"Have you any dislike to Neanticut?"

"Not the least," she said laughing.

"I dare not go further, and inquire as to the company. Don't you know how to drive, Miss Faith?"

"And what if I do?" said Faith.

"Is there any insuperable objection to your driving Mrs. Derrick over to Neanticut Saturday morning? It would be so comfortable to know there were people there — and fires — in case it was a cold morning," said Mr. Linden demurely. "I could send Reuben with you, and the key."

"O that's good!" cried Faith clapping her hands. "Mother, will you go?"

"Why don't I always, just where you want me to, child?" said her mother. "I should like to go to Neanticut, besides. I haven't been there this long while. But I guess you and I can open the house, Faith, without Reuben Taylor."

"After all, Mr. Linden," said Faith, "there is a great objection to my driving mother over there, — because she'll drive me."

"There is a great objection to your opening the house — for Reuben has the key — or will have it; and keys you know, are matters of trust, and not transferable. I don't know but Mr. Simlins would make an exception in your favour, — but I shall not ask him."

"I am glad to have Reuben along," said Faith. "And I suppose we must take our dinner with us, Mr. Linden?"

"I have no doubt there will be dinner enough from other quarters," he answered, "but how much of it will be like

Mrs. Seacomb's tea I cannot say. I think it would be safe to take a very little basket—such as would suffice for two ladies."

"O with Reuben we can manage nicely," said Faith joyously. He looked at her — pleased with her pleasure.

"Don't make any grand preparation for me," he said, — "you know I must eat in commons — for the same reason that I cannot offer to drive you over."

"Does that mean that you will have to take a piece out of everybody's basket?"

"As near as possible!"

Faith shook her head, but made no further remark.

Early Saturday morning, before any other steps had brushed the dew from the grassy roadside, Reuben Taylor was on his way from the rocky coast point where he lived to the smooth well-ordered abode of Mr. Simlins. Receiving from that gentleman the key of the old house at Neanticut, and having harnessed the horses to the big wagon under his special directions, Reuben drove down to the village, put horses and wagon in safe keeping, and reported himself at Mrs. Derrick's. All things there being in readiness, that small turn-out was soon on its way; leaving Mr. Linden to look after his own much larger consignment. And despite the presence of Reuben Mrs. Derrick chose to drive; because, as she said, "when she had the reins in her own hands, she knew which way the horse was going."

The road for awhile went on towards Mrs. Seacomb's, but passing the turn into the woods kept on its uneven way to the ferry. The natural hedges — all glittering with dew — shewed little colour but in the leaves. The fair clethra and the sweet clematis had ended their short reign and were gone, and high-coloured sumachs flamed out in insurrection. Now the country became more hilly, and where the eastern portion of Pattaquasset lay close upon the Mong, the road went down by a succession of steep pitches to its shore. Then the road ran on through a sort of half drained marsh — varied in its course by holes and logs and a little bridge, and then they were at the ferry.

Now the ferry between Pattaquasset and Neanticut was — and is, as I trust it will always be — propelled by wind power. No plodding horses to distract one's eyes from the surrounding peace, — no puffing steam to break with its discord the sweet rush of the water, — but a large, flat-bottomed boat, a white sail, and a Yankee steersman. The only evil attendant upon these advantages is, that the establishment cannot be upon both sides at once — and that the steersman, like other mortals, must take his dinner. This time it happened to be breakfast; for having been much interrupted and called for at the hour when he should have taken that refreshment, long Tim declared "he would have it now, and no mistake!" The little fact that two ladies were waiting for him on the other side, did not in the least affect his appetite or his deliberation.

"Faith," said her mother when they had waited about a quarter of an hour, "if 'tother wagon should catch up we shouldn't get there first!"

Faith laughed and said, "Well, mother!"

"Well, child," said her mother cheerfully, while Reuben waved fresh signals to the obdurate ferryman, "I'm sure I don't mind, if you don't."

"He's coming out now!" said Reuben, — "or his wife is — and that's just as good."

And so it appeared; for a short vision of a red petticoat and blue jacket on the other bank, was followed by the ferryman himself, — the white sail rose up above the little boat, and she floated smoothly over. Then Mrs. Derrick drove carefully across the boat bridge, and long Tim pushed off into the stream. How pretty it was! the winding river above, with its woody banks, and villages, and spires; and its broader bends below, towards the Sound. They were about midway in the stream when Reuben suddenly cried out —

"Look, Miss Faith!" —

And there came the great wagon, at not the slowest possible rate, over the long marsh road.

The first sight of the ferryboat and her freight was the

signal for a simultaneous shout from the whole wagon load — which long Tim took for a summons to himself.

"'Taint no sort o' use hollerin' like *that*," he said, with a little turn of his steering oar; "'cause I aint a goin' back till I get somewheres to go back *from* — nor then neither mabbe. I kin count dollars whar they kint count cents, neow."

And 'neow' the little wagon was beyond pursuit, — up the hill from the ferry, on over the farm road, drove Mrs. Derrick — somewhat at the quickest; until the old untenanted house rose just before them, and Reuben sprang down to take the reins and help the ladies out.

It was a pleasant old farmhouse that, in spite of its deserted condition. They went to the kitchen, bright with windows looking out to grass fields and trees. Mrs. Derrick stood at open door and window, recalling scenes and people she remembered there, or watching for the big wagon to make its appearance; while Reuben and Faith went to the outhouses, and finally by dint of perseverance found a supply of wood in an old rotten tumbled-down fence. Mrs. Derrick proclaimed that the wagon was coming, as the foragers returned; but there was a splendid blaze going up chimney before the aforesaid conveyance drew up at the door, and the whole first party turned out to see it unload.

The wagon was unloaded in the twinkling of an eye; then came rummaging for baskets; then so many boys and so many baskets hopped and hummed round, like a little bevy of wasps — with nothing at least of the bee business-character about them.

"Mr. Linden, be we going to stop here?" —

"Is here where the trees be, Mr. Linden?" —

"Mr. Linden, Joe Deacon aint behaving nohow!"

"Mr. Linden, will we leave our baskets and come back to the house? or will they be to go along?" — inquired a more sober tongue.

While others were giving their opinion in little asides that it was 'prime' — and 'fust-rate' — and arguing the com-

parative promise of chestnut and hickory trees. And one of the bigger boys of the party, *not* distinguished for his general good qualities, sidling up to Reuben, accosted him under breath with a sly,

"So you druv Mr. Linden's sweetheart. Aint you spry!"

If Reuben had been in that line, he would probably have sent the offender head first down the bank, — as it was, he said quietly,

"I wouldn't let Mr. Linden hear me say that, Phil, if I was you."

"Don't mean ter. Aint you great! But I say, — Joe Deacon says you did."

"Joe Deacon's made a mistake for once in his life," said Reuben rather contemptuously — "and it isn't the first, by several."

"Reuben," said Mr. Linden approaching the group, "you may all go and find where the best trees are, and then come back and report to me. I put you in charge. Understand" — he added, raising his voice a little, "Reuben Taylor is leader of the search — whoever does not obey his orders, does not obey mine." — And in a minute the courtyard was clear. Then Mr. Linden turned and walked up to the house.

"Now what are you ladies going to do with yourselves?" he said. "Will you come out and sit under the trees and look on — taking the chance of being hit by a stray nut now and then?"

"We can't go wrong to-day," said Faith, with whom the spirit of enjoyment was well at play. "When mother feels in the mood of it we'll come. We can find you — we know where to look. Weren't you obliged to us for doing the waiting at the ferry?"

"And for looking so picturesque in the distance, — it was quite a thing to be grateful for. I think you will have no difficulty in finding where we are — there will be noise enough to guide you. I hope you have not brought a book along, Miss Faith."

"Why, Mr. Linden?"

"The 'running brooks' are good letter-press," he said — "and the grey stones, and that white oak in the meadow. And is not that woodpecker a pretty illustration?"

"I have looked at them often," said Faith. "I don't know how to *read* them as you do. There isn't any brook here, though, that I know of, but Kildeer river. You'll like Neanticut, Mr. Linden. I'm so glad you let us come. I'll read everything — that I can."

"I don't know how long everything'll last you, child — at the rate you've gone on lately," said Mrs. Derrick who stood in the doorway.

Faith smiled again, and shook her head a little at the same time as her eye went from the woodpecker to the green leaves above his head, then to the bright red of some pepperidge trees further off, to the lush grass of the meadow, and on to the soft brownish, reddish, golden hues of distant woodland. Her eye came back as from a book it would take long to read thoroughly.

"I am so glad it is such a day!" she repeated.

"I see my boys are coming back," Mr. Linden said, with a smile which hardly belonged to them, — "I must go and get their report. Au revoir, Miss Faith." And he went forward into the midst of the little swarm — so manageable in his hands, so sure to sting anybody else.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick, looking over Faith's head from her more elevated position of the door-sill (looking *at* it too); "Child, why don't you get —" and there, for the first and last time in her life, Mrs. Derrick stopped short in the middle of a sentence.

"What, mother?"

But Mrs. Derrick replied not.

"What do you want me to get, mother?"

"I don't know as I want you to get anything, child — you've got enough now for me. Not that he wouldn't like it, either," said Mrs. Derrick musingly — "because if he wouldn't, *I* wouldn't give much for him. But I guess it's just as well not." And Mrs. Derrick stroked her hand fondly over

Faith's head, and told her that if she stood out there without a bonnet she would get sunburnt.

"But mother!" said Faith at this enigmatical speech, "what do you mean? *Who* wouldn't like *what?*"

"What does it signify, child? — since I didn't say it?"

"But mother," persisted Faith gently, "what had I better get that I haven't?"

"I don't know as you *had* better get it, child — and I never said he wouldn't like it, I'm sure," said Mrs. Derrick with a little self-vindication.

"Who, mother?"

"Why — nobody," said Mrs. Derrick, — "who's talking of anybody?"

"Dear mother," said Faith, "don't you mean to tell me what you mean?"

"I guess it's just as well not," her mother repeated. "The fact that he'd like it don't prove anything."

Faith looked at her, coloured a little, laughed a little, and gave up the point.

The morning passed on its pleasant way in quietness; at least with the old farmhouse and its two occupants. Mrs. Derrick was not without her knitting, and having come from the door sat comfortably click-clacking her needles together — and her thoughts too perhaps — before the cheerful blaze of the fence sticks. Faith *had* a book with her — a little one — with which she sat in the kitchen doorway, which looked towards the direction the nut party had taken; and apparently divided her attention between that volume and the one Mr. Linden had recommended. For she looked down at the one and looked off at the other by turns, in a sort of peaceful musing and note-taking, altogether suited to the October stillness and beauty. Now and then she got up to replenish the fire. And then the beauty and her musing got the better of the reading, and Faith sat with her book in her hand, looking out into the dream-provoking atmosphere. No sound came from the far-off nut trees; the crickets and grasshoppers and katydids alone broke the stillness of the unused farm.

Only they moved, and the wind-stirred leaves, and the slow-creeping shadows.

When these last were but an hour's length from the tree stems, Faith proposed an adjournment to the nut trees before the party should come back to lunch. The fire was mended, the pot of coffee put on to warm; and they locked the door and set out.

It was not hot that day, even under the meridian sun. They crossed an orchard, and one or two farm fields, on the skirts of which grew single trees of great beauty. White oaks that had seen hundreds of years, yet stood in as fresh and hale green youth as the upstart of twenty; sometimes a hemlock or a white pine stretching its lithe branches far and wide and generously allowed to do so in despite of pasture and crops. Then came broken ground, and beyond this a strip of fallow at the further border of which stood a continuous wall of woodland, being in fact the crest of the bank of the little river Faith had referred to.

And now, and truly for one or two fields before, the shouts and cries of the nut-hunters rang through the air. For just edging, and edging into, the border of trees last spoken of, were the great chestnuts and hickories; and underneath and among them many little dark spots were flying about; which spots, as Mrs. Derrick and Faith came up, enlarged into the familiar outlines of boys' caps, jackets, and trowsers, and ran about on two legs apiece.

CHAPTER X.

The two ladies paused at a safe distance, — there seemed to be nothing but boys astir — boys and nuts; and these last not dropping from the tree, but thrown from hand to hand (hand to head would be more correct) of the busy throng. Some picking up, some throwing stones to bring down, others at some flat stone 'shucking,' others still filling their baskets. And four boys out of five, cracking and eating — whatever else they were about. The grass, trodden down by the many

feet, lay in prostrate shadow at the foot of the great tree; and the shadows of other trees fell and met in soft wavy outline. From the side of one old tree a family of grey squirrels looked out, to see the besiegers lay waste the surrounding country; in the top of another — a tall hickory, full clad with golden leaves, Mr. Linden sat — to view the same country himself; well knowing that he had given the boys full occupation for at least fifteen minutes. He was not very visible from below, so thickly did the gold leaves close him in; but Faith heard one of the boys call out,

"You Johnny Fax! if you throw stones in *that* tree, you'll hit Mr. Linden."

"Trust Johnny Fax for not never throwin' so high as *he* is," said Joe Deacon.

"I don't *want* to —" said Johnny Fax — "I don't want to fetch *him* down."

Whereupon there was a general shout, and "Guess you'd better not, Johnny!" — "He might come, if you didn't just hit him," vociferated from various quarters.

"My!" Mrs. Derrick said, surveying the golden hickory, "how on earth did he ever get up? — And how *do* you s'pose, Faith, he'll ever get down!"

Faith's low laugh was her only answer; but it would have told, to anybody who could thoroughly have translated it, Faith's mind on both points.

Apparently he was in no haste to come down — certainly meant to send the nuts first; for a sudden shower of hickory nuts and leaves swept away every boy from the tree near which Faith and her mother stood, and threw them all into its vortex. Drop, drop, the nuts came down, with their sweet patter upon the grass; while the golden leaves fell singly or in sprays, or floated off upon the calm air.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick, "how pretty it is! I haven't seen such a sight since — since a long while ago," she added with a sobering face.

"I want to be there under the tree," said Faith looking

on enviously. "No mother — and I haven't seen it before in a long time, either. It's as pretty as it can be!"

"Run along then, child," said her mother, — "only take care of your eyes. Why shouldn't you? I don't want to pick up nuts myself, but I'll go down and pick you up."

Faith however kept away from the crowd under the hickory tree; and went peering about under some others where the ground was beaten and the branches had been, and soon found enough spoil to be hammering away with a stone on a rock like the rest. But she couldn't escape the boys so, for little runners came to her constantly. One brought a handful of nuts, another a better stone — while a third told her of 'lots' under the other tree; and Reuben Taylor was ready to crack or climb as she chose to direct.

"If you'll come down the other side, Miss Faith," said Reuben, "down by the bank, you could see it all a great deal better."

Faith seized two or three nuts and jumped up, and Reuben led the way through the leaf-strewn grass to the other side of the mob. But mobs are uncertain things! No sooner was Faith seen approaching the hickory, though yet full three feet from the utmost bound of its shadow, than a sudden pause in the great business of the day was followed by such a tumultuous shout of "Three cheers for Miss Faith Derrick! — the prettiest girl in Pattaquasset!" — that she was well nigh deafened. And promptly upon that, Joe Deacon stepped up to Reuben and whispered,

"*That*'ll fetch him down!"

Faith did not hear the words — she only heard Reuben's indignant,

"Joe Deacon! behave yourself. What makes you always leave your manners home? that big basket of yours would have held 'em all, easy."

"I didn't know but Sam might want 'em," replied the unabashed Joe, dashing back into the midst of his companions, while Reuben at last reached the pretty look-out

at the edge of the woods where Faith could see the whole meadow and its scattered trees. And having placed her there ran off again. Standing half hidden by the oaks and chestnuts, she could see the whole group clustering about the climber now, for he had come down from his high post.

"Boys," he said, "I am going back to the house to dinner. Any boy who prefers nuts to dinner may stay and pick them up."

A sudden recollection came over Faith that her fire was probably well down and coffee *not* in a state presentable. Taking a survey of the ground, and calculating that so large a company would want a little time to get under weigh, she slipped round to where her mother sat, and giving her a word, set off fleetly and skilfully under cover of some outstanding chestnuts across the fallow. If she had known it, Faith need not have shunned to shew her running, for prettier running could not be. She was soon hidden in the further woodland.

The rest of the party took it more leisurely, so their outrunner easily gained her point; and having put the fire in order stood at the door to watch the progress of the coming invasion. It looked enough like that. For though excellent order of march had been kept for most of the way, the main body of the troops maintaining a proper position in the rear of their captain who was quietly escorting Mrs. Derrick over the meadows, no sooner did the whole band come in sight of the distant place of lunch baskets, than it became manifest for the hundred thousandth time that liberty too long enjoyed leads to license. Scattering a little from the direct line of march, the better to cover their purpose or evade any check thereto, as if by concert, first one and then another set off on a run, — sprang the orchard fence, — and by the time the mid-orchard was reached all of Mr. Linden's force with the exception of one or two of the very steadiest, were ahead of him and straining in full run, if not in full cry, for the now near-at-hand farmhouse quarry. Beyond all call or hindrance. Standing at the kitchen door, Faith watched their coming; but discerning

beyond the runners the one or two figures that did not indeed 'bring up the rear' but that covered it, and supposing that the invaders' object was to storm the wagon in which the lunch baskets were hid, she stood her ground; till she perceived that the foremost of the band were making straight for the kitchen door, and all the rest in their order. Faith gave back a little and the whole horde poured in. The fire was in a brisk blaze; the table had nice white cups and naperies on it; the nose of the coffee-pot was steaming. It looked altogether an inviting place. Down went hats and caps on the floor, from some of the party, and the whole of them with flushed faces and open mouths took the survey.

"Ain't it jolly here!"

"I wonder if he'll let us take our dinner in here. There's lots o' room."

"It's good shady."

"It's a long sight better under the trees."

"Coffee! — I'm blessed!" — said a fifth speaker bending over the fireplace; while a sixth began slyly to inspect what lay under Faith's napkins on the table.

"Charley," said Mr. Linden's quiet voice from the doorway, "did Miss Derrick desire you to uncover her dishes?"

The hand slipped from what it touched, as stealthily the boy's eye went to the face of the speaker, in the one place if not in the other 'to see what there might be.'

"I will bear witness that you have 'carried' the house," Mr. Linden went on, — "now I should like to see you carry the wagon. It will be a more useful enterprise than this. Only remember that one of the first duties of a surprise party is to go forth softly."

"Where will we carry the wagon to, sir?" inquired one of the party.

"As far from the house as you can," said Mr. Linden, with a little glance at Faith. "Come! be off! — great enterprises are never finished till they are begun."

"I'd like to begin dinner, anyhow," said one, catching up his cap and leading off.

As quick and more quick than it had been filled, the room was cleared; and laughing Faith watched the busy swarm as they poured towards their magazine. Then remembered her own and came back to offer it.

"You may as well rest, Mr. Linden," said Faith as she offered him a cup of coffee. "I'm sure *they* are all comfortable. Besides, you particularly desired a fire and somebody in the house, you know."

"Miss Faith," he said, (taking the cup however) "I'm afraid your notions of duty are very slack! What sort of a captain would you make to a beleaguered city? I shall make you read the story of Catherine Douglass."

"Will you?" said Faith looking very pleased. "And what is 'beleaguered,' Mr. Linden? in the meantime."

"'Beleaguered' means, to be beset with a swarm of invaders who want to come in and ought to be kept out."

"I didn't know I ought to keep them out," said Faith laughing, "or I'd have done it."

Mr. Linden shook his head doubtfully. "I saw you give way!" he said, — "I doubt whether there was even a show of resistance. Now Catherine Douglass — But I must go. No, don't tempt me with apple pie — you have no idea of the pies in that wagon. Perhaps if I get successfully through them, I'll come back and dispose of yours. What are you reading to-day? — 'Le Philosophe'?"

A little soberness came over Faith's smile as she shook her head and said no.

"I can't stay to ask a question upon that— but I'll ask you two by and by to pay for it."

And he went out to that little cluster of life that hung about the great wagon, making himself at once the centre of pleasure and interest and even fun, as Faith's eye and ear now and then informed her. It was pretty, the way they closed in about him — wild and untutored as they were, — pretty to see him meet them so easily on their own ground, yet always enticing them towards something better. Mrs.

Derrick thought so too, for she stood in the doorway and smiled very pleasantly.

"He's a real nice man, Faith," she said. "I don't wonder the boys like him."

Faith did not wonder at it, but she did not answer, though she too stood looking.

The ladies had finished their lunch, and Mr. Linden had perhaps *not* finished his, for he came in again to take another cup of coffee while the boys were disposing of that very ragged piece of time which the end of a boys' feast invariably is. So much peace and quietness he gave himself, if he did not give himself a sandwich — of which I am not certain.

"Mr. Linden," said Faith, "I want to ask something — will you tell me if you don't like it?"

"Don't like to have you ask me, do you mean? I do like it."

"Then," said Faith half laughing, "will you tell me if you don't quite like what I mean?"

"I'll see —" Mr. Linden replied with a smile. "It's not safe for teachers to commit themselves."

"But I must commit *my*self," said Faith. "I want to go and pick up nuts with the boys under the trees — may I?"

She looked for her answer with an eye that thought *he* might possibly find an objection where she saw none.

He paused a little before he replied,

"I think you may — if I could be among them and answer for their good behaviour I should not need to think about it; but you know a man loses power when he is too far above the heads of his audience. Yet I think I may trust them — and you," he added with a little smile. "Especially as the first tree touched this afternoon is yours."

"What does that mean?" said Faith, her doubt all gone.

"Do you think I shall so far forget my office as to let them pick up nuts for nobody but themselves? Therefore the first tree this afternoon is for you — or if you please for your mother; the second for Mr. Simlins. If that will take away your desire for 'the fun,' why I cannot help it."

"I have no objection to pick up nuts for mother, nor even for Mr. Simlins," said Faith smiling. "And I am not afraid of the boys — I know half of them, you know. Thank you, Mr. Linden!"

"You might, if I could take you up into the tree-top. There is fine reading on those upper shelves."

Her eye shewed instantly that she liked that 'higher' fun best — not the tree-top, verily, but the reading, that she could not get at. Yet for Faith there were charms plenty below the tree-tops, in both kinds; and she looked very happy.

"Well" — Mr. Linden said, "as the successful meeting of one emergency always helps us in the next, and as it is quite impossible to tell *what* you may meet under those nut trees, — let me give you a little abstract of Catherine Douglass, before you read it and before I go. The said lady wishing to keep the door against sundry lords and gentlemen who came with murderous intent against her sovereign; and finding no bar to aid her loyal endeavours, — did boldly thrust her own arm through the stanchions of the door. To be sure — 'the brave lady's arm was soon broken,' — but after all, what did that signify?"

And with a laughing gesture of farewell, he once more left the house. With which cessation of murmuring voices, Mrs. Derrick awoke from her after dinner nap in the rocking chair. Faith was standing in the middle of the floor, smiling and looking in a puzzle.

"Mother, will you go over to the nutting again?"

"I'm a great deal more likely to go to sleep again," said Mrs. Derrick rubbing her eyes. "It's the sleepiest place I ever saw in my life — or else it's having nothing to do. I don't doubt you're half asleep too, Faith, only you won't own it."

The decision was, that Mrs. Derrick preferred to sit quiet in the house; she said she would maybe run down by and by and see what they were at. So Faith took her sunbonnet, kissed her mother; and went forth with light step over the meadow and through the orchard.

The nutting party she found a little further on in the same edge of woodland. It seemed that they had pitched upon a great chestnut for her tree; and Faith was half concerned to see what a quantity of work they had given themselves on her account. However, the proverb of 'many hands' was verified here; the ground under the chestnut tree was like a colony of ants, while in the capacious head of the tree their captain, established quite at his ease, was whipping off the burrs with a long pole.

Faith took a general view as she came up, and then fell upon the chestnut burrs like the rest of them; and no boy there worked more readily or joyously. There seemed little justification of Mr. Linden's doubts of the boys or fears for her. Faith was everywhere among them, and making Reuben's prophecy true, that 'they would all enjoy themselves a great deal better' for her being there; throwing nuts into the baskets of the little boys and pleasant words at the heads of the big ones, that hit softly and did gentle execution; giving sly handfuls to Reuben, and then hammering out for some little fellow the burrs that her hands were yet more unfit to deal with than his; and doing it all with a will that the very spirit of enjoyment seemed to have moved. *She* in any danger of rude treatment from those boys! Nothing further from the truth. And so her happy face informed Mr. Linden, when he at last descended to terra firma out of the stripped chestnut tree.

He did not say anything, but leaning up against the great brown trunk of the chestnut took a pleased survey of the whole — then went to work with the rest.

"Boys!" he said — "aren't there enough of you to open these burrs as fast as Miss Derrick can pick out the nuts? You should never let a lady prick her fingers when you can prick yours in her place."

There was a general shout and rush at this, which made Faith give way before it. The burrs disappeared fast; the brown nuts gathered into an immense heap. That tree was done.

"Hurrah! for Mr. Simlins!" shouted all the boys, throwing up their caps into the air, — then turning somersets, and wrestling, and rolling over by way of further relief to their feelings.

"The chestnut beyond that red maple for him," said Mr. Linden, flinging a little stone in the right direction; at which with another shout the little tornado swept away.

"Will you follow, Miss Faith? or are you tired?"

"No, I'm not tired yet. I must do something for Mr. Simlins."

"Well don't handle those burrs —" he said. "They're worse than darning needles."

"Have you seen Kildeer river yet, Mr. Linden?"

"I have had a bird's eye view."

Faith looked a little wistfully, but only said,

"We must look at it after the nutting is done. That's a bit of reading hereabout you ought not to pass over."

"I mean to read 'everything I can,' too," he said with a smile as they reached the tree.

"Now Mr. Linden," said Joe Deacon, "*this* tree's a whapper! How long you suppose it'll take you to go up?"

"About as long as it would you to come down — every-one knows how long *that* would be. Stand out of my way, boys — catch all the burrs on your own heads and don't let one fall on Miss Derrick." And amidst the general laugh Mr. Linden swung himself up into the branches in a way that made his words good; while Joe Deacon whistled and danced 'Yankee Doodle' round the great trunk.

Half at least of Mr. Linden's directions the boys obeyed; — they caught all the burrs they well could, on their own heads. Faith was too busy among them to avoid catching some on her own bright hair whenever her sunbonnet declined to stay on, which happened frequently. The new object lent this tree a new interest of its own, and boys being an untiring species of animals the sport went on with no perceptible flagging. But when this tree too was about half cleared, Faith withdrew a little from the busy rush and bustle, left the chest-

nuts and chestnut burrs, and sat down on the bank to rest and look. Her eye wandered to the further woodland, softest of all in hazy veils; to the nearer brilliant vegetation; the open fallow; the wood behind her, where the trees closed in upon each other; oftenest of all, at the 'whapper' of a tree in which Mr. Linden still kept his place, and at the happy busy sight and sound of all under that tree.

And so it happened, that when in time Mr. Linden came down out of Mr. Simlins' chestnut, besides the boys he found nobody there but Mr. Simlins himself.

"Well!" — said that gentleman after a cordial grasp of the hand, — "I reckon, in the matter of nuts you're going to reduce me to penur'ousness! How you like Neanticut?"

"It's a fine place," said Mr. Linden. — "And for the matter of nuts, you need not take the benefit of the bankrupt act *yet*, Mr. Simlins."

"Over here to see a man on business," Mr. Simlins went on in explanation, — "and thought I'd look at you by the way. Don't you want to take this farm of me?"

"I might want to do it — and yet not be able," was the smiling reply; while one of the smallest boys, pulling the tail of the grey coat which Mr. Simlins wore 'on business,' and pointing to the heap of nuts, said succinctly,

"Them's yourn!"

"Mine!" said Mr. Simlins. "Well where's yourn? What have you done with Miss Faith Derrick?"

"Why we hain't done nothin' to her," said the boy — "she's done a heap to us."

"What has she done to you, you green hickory?"

"Why — she's run round, firstrate," said little Rob, — "and she's helped me shuck."

"So some o' you's thanked her. 'Twan't *you*. Here, you sir," said Mr. Simlins, addressing this time Joe Deacon, — "what have you been doing with Miss Faith Derrick?"

"I bain't Sam," was Joe's rather cool rejoinder, with a slight relapsing into Yankee Doodle.

"Hollo!" said Mr. Simlins — "I thought you'd learned all school could teach you, and give up to come?"

"Only the last part is true, Mr. Simlins," said Mr. Linden, who while Joe spoke had been himself speaking to one of the other boys.

Mr. Simlins grunted. "School ain't all 'nuts to him,'" he said with a grim smile. "Well which of you was it? — 'twas a fellow about as big as you — here, you sir!" — addressing in a more assured tone another boy who was swaggering near, — "*you!* what have you been doing to Miss Faith? It was you."

"'Twan't me, nother!" said the boy surlily; "nor I hain't done nothin'! but minded my own business."

In a tone which implied that Mr. Simlins was not acting on the same laudable principle.

"What has been done?" said Mr. Linden. And certainly *this* tone implied that he was minding his own business.

"Well," said Mr. Simlins, "I don't know as they've done much of anything; but I guessed they'd been givin' her some sass or vexin' her somehow; and as she's a kind o' favour*ite* o' mine it riled me. I was too fur to hear what 'twas."

"Where was she?"

"She was round yonder — not fur — There had been some sort of a scrimmage, I guess, between two of 'em, a little one and this fellow; and she parted 'em. She had hold o' this one when I see 'em first — *you* couldn't have done it better," said Mr. Simlins with a sly cast of his eye; — "you can set her to be your 'vice' when you want one. I was comin' up from the river, you see, and came up behind 'em, and I couldn't hear what they said; but when she let him go, I see her give a kind o' sheer look round this way, and then she put up her hand to her cheek and cleared for home like — a gazetteer!" — said Mr. Simlins, who had given this information in an undertone. "Made straight tracks for the house, I tell ye!"

"A little one and *which* one?" was the next inquiry.

Mr. Simlins went peering about among the crowd and

finally laid hold on the identical shoulder of little Johnny Fax.

"Ain't it you?" said Mr. Simlins. "Ain't that red basket yourn?"

Johnny nodded.

"I knowed the basket," said Mr. Simlins returning. "That's about all that makes the difference between one boy and another! what sort of a basket he carries. The other fellow is the one I was speakin' to first — I can swear to *him* — the big one."

Mr. Linden took out his watch.

"Thank you, Mr. Simlins," he said. "Boys — it is half past four, — get your nuts and baskets and bring them up to the house. Reuben Taylor — do you see that it is done." With which words Mr. Linden also 'made tracks' for the house — and 'straight' ones, but with not too much notice-taking of the golden leaves under his feet.

The truth about Faith was this. While sitting on the grass, taking the pleasure of the place and time, the peace was at length broken by discordant sounds in her neighbourhood; sounds of harsh voices, and scuffling. Looking round for the cause and meaning of all this, she found that the voices came from behind a thicket of sumach and laurel at her back, and belonged to some of the boys. Faith went round the thicket. There were a big boy and a little boy tugging at a basket, both tugging; the little fellow holding to it with all his might, while the big boy, almost getting it from him with one hand, was laying the other very freely about his ears and shoulders. Faith heard the little one say, "I'll tell —"

And the other, a boy whose name Faith had learned only that morning, shouted in answer,

"You tell! You tell if you dare! You tell and I'll kill you! — Leave hold!" —

A round blow was given with the words, which told, but the little boy still held on to his basket.

"For shame, Phil Davids! you a big boy!" — said Faith.

There was a stay of proceedings while they looked at her, both parties keeping fast hold however, and both tongues at once combating for hearing and belief. The little boy, Johnny Fax himself, said the nuts were his; which the elder denied.

"Let him have his nuts, Phil," said Faith gently. "He must have them — they belong to him."

"He aint a goin' ter, though," said Davids, — "and *you* can't do nothin', if you air Mr. Linden's sweetheart. You air — Joe Deacon says you be. Leave hold, you! —"

Thinking Faith quelled perhaps, Phil began the struggle again fiercely, with grappling and blows. But Faith laid hold suddenly on the arm that was rising the second time, and bade the boy sternly behave himself and let the basket go. It was not immediately done. He had strength much more than hers, but something withheld him from exerting it. Nothing withheld his tongue.

"Aint you Mr. Linden's sweetheart?" he said insolently. "Joe Deacon says you be."

"No sir!" said Faith; "and you are a bad boy."

"Joe Deacon says you be!"

But Faith did not relax her hold, and spoke with a steady voice and for that time at least with a steady eye of command which was obeyed.

"Let him go! — Johnny, run off with your basket and be quiet; that's a good boy. Davids, you'll be quiet the rest of the day for your own sake."

The boys parted sullenly, Johnny to run off as she had bidden him; and Faith turned from the green bank, the nut trees, and the frolic, and laying one hand upon the cheek that faced that way, as if to hide its burning from eyes too far off to see it, she went into the house.

She put the brands together which had burnt out, and built the fire up on the strictest principles, though no fire was wanted at present; the day had mellowed into warmth. Perhaps Faith recollected that after she had got through, for she left the fire to take care of itself and sat down again on the

doorstep looking towards the nut-tree field. For a good while her cheek wore its troubled flush, her hand went up to it once or twice as if to cool it off, and her brow bespoke her using other and more effectual measures. It cooled at last, into complete quietness and sweetness; and Faith's face was just like itself when the first of the party came back from the nut field.

That first one, as we have seen, was Mr. Linden. He found both the ladies in the farmhouse kitchen; Mrs. Derrick very comfortably at her knitting. Faith was doing nothing; but she looked up, when she looked up, with just her own face; not certainly in the happy glow he had seen under the nut tree, nor with the sparkle of busy pleasure it had worn in the morning; but as it was every day at home.

Mr. Linden arranged the fire and then stood considering it — or something — for a minute in silence; until Mrs. Derrick inquired "if he had found as much as he expected?" — but upon his replying somewhat dryly, "Rather more" — the conversation dropped again.

"You ought to be tired now, Mr. Linden," Faith said gently.

"I am afraid you are."

"No," she said, — "I am not at all."

"Well then — why shouldn't we have our look at Kildeer river? You said we must."

"O, if you like it!" said Faith, a bright little tinge of pleasure coming into her cheek, and her sunbonnet was in hand immediately. "But aren't you tired?" she added doubtfully as they were passing out of the door. "You've been hard at work."

"You will have to pay for saying you are not, Miss Faith, — I mean to make you run all the way down to the bank."

And holding out his hand to her, Mr. Linden half made his threat good; for though his own pace was not much more than a quick walk, by means of skilful short cuts and long steps, Faith had a gentle little run a good part of the way.

Not down through the crowd of boys and baskets, but skirting the meadow — passing from shelter of one great tree to another, till they reached the bank and saw the blue waters of Kildeer river at their feet. There she was permitted to sit down and rest. A little laughing and a little flushed, her happy look was almost brought back again. But she sat and gazed down at the pretty stream and its picturesque banks without saying anything; letting Mr. Linden take his own view of them. His own view was a peculiar one — to judge by his words.

"Miss Faith, I suppose you are not much acquainted with law forms, — yet you perhaps know that an important witness in an important case, is sometimes put in prison until his evidence is obtained."

Faith looked up at him in pure astonishment, the corners of her mouth indicating that she expected another *puzzle*, or rather was already engaged in one. The look made his gravity give way a little.

"I thought you might like to know your position at present," he said.

"I don't know it yet, Mr. Linden."

"It is that of the unfortunate prisoner to whom I referred."

"A prisoner! —" said Faith looking up at him very much amused. "Well, Mr. Linden?"

He looked amused too, yet with a difference.

"Well, Miss Faith — You are a prisoner, for political purposes. There is no practicable way for you to get back to the house save through the witness-box."

"Where is the witness-box?" said Faith.

"Are you in a hurry to be in it?"

"No," said Faith with a very unshadowed smile, "I am not in a hurry for anything."

"Then tell me what you have been reading to-day," he said, throwing himself down on the grass beside her.

She looked at him, hesitated, then said with a lowered tone,

"I have been reading what you told me to read — and my testament."

Mr. Linden lifted his hat a little, replaced it — rather more down over his brows than before, looking steadily down at Kildeer river the while.

"Why did you look grave when I asked you if you had brought 'Le Philosophe'?"

"I didn't know I did!" said Faith simply. "I had brought only my testament."

"Only —" Mr. Linden repeated. "Well, from 'only' a testament and only such a scene — a skilful reader may get much." Then turning and looking her full in the face, he said, "Miss Faith — what have those boys done to vex you?"

A sudden, painful, startled flush answered him. She did not look now; she said earnestly,

"Please Mr. Linden, don't speak of it!"

"I must know —" was his only answer.

"No," she said gently but troubled, — "you mustn't know, and there is no need you should. There is no need," she repeated eagerly.

"There is another true little witness I can call upon — but I would rather have your account."

"How did you know? — how did you know anything about it?" said Faith, facing round upon him in her turn.

"Gentlemen of what Miss Danforth is pleased to call 'my profession' must know things occasionally," said Mr. Linden.

"*What* do you think you know, Mr. Linden?" she said a little timidly.

His answer was gentle though resolute.

"I don't *think* I know anything. What I know, I know —— what I do not, I will."

Faith's head half drooped for an instant, and the flush which had faded came back painfully. Then she looked at him again, and though the flush was there she spoke as usual.

"You won't try, Mr. Linden — because I am going to ask you not. It is nothing you need take up — it was nothing

but — what perhaps I was foolish to mind. I don't mind it now — much —"

But there was a grave falling off in the tone of that 'much.' She felt it herself, for she rallied and said with her own quiet frank smile,

"I shall not mind it at all to-morrow."

Mr. Linden looked at her while she spoke, gravely and intently enough; but then he looked away at the river again, and probably read problems in its soft rippling waters, for he spoke not. Overhead a hawk sailed noiselessly to and fro, on spread wings, — in the trees close at hand a squirrel chattered and barked with his mouth full. The afternoon light left Kildeer river step by step, and the shadows crept after.

Now the one white speck of cloud reflected in that peaceful stream was no break in its beauty, -- it marred nothing, nay, even brought a little glow of its own to replace the sunbeams. Yet at that speck did Mr. Linden take aim — sending his pebble so surely, so powerfully, that the mirror itself was shattered to the remotest shore! Then he stood up and announced that it was time to go.

Faith stood up, but stood still, and waited somewhat anxiously upon the answer to her question.

"Then, Mr. Linden, you will not speak of it any more?"

"The witness is discharged," he answered lightly, and walking on.

She sprang after and placed herself directly in his way.

"Mr. Linden — please give me your promise!"

He looked down at her with eyes that were a little moved.

"Miss Faith," he said, "please give me yours!"

"For what?" said Faith.

"That you will trust me — and not ask what I do."

"Yes," — said Faith, — "but — You must trust *me*, Mr. Linden," she said smiling at him, — "and believe me that this is nothing for you to take up — mere nonsense; — nothing at all to-morrow, — it is nothing to me now. I want your word."

She wanted it very much, it was easy to see; but beyond that, her face did not belie her words.

"I don't suppose Mrs. Derrick ever called you 'naughty child'" — said Mr. Linden, — "but if ever she did she might to-night. Look where the sun is — and where I am, — and guess where those boys are! Come —" and it was not easy to resist the hand that again took hold of hers, nor the quick pace at which he went forward.

And for some fields' length Faith yielded and went as fast as he pleased. Then as he stopped to put up a bar-place she said again, very gently but firmly too, standing before him,

"Mr. Linden, I think I have a *right* to ask this. I know what I ask, but you do not."

"I never questioned your right, Miss Faith."

"Then you'll not deny it to me?"

"What is your idea of trust?" said Mr. Linden, replacing the last bar.

"That it is something I ought to have just now," said Faith, smiling a little.

He stood leaning on the bars and looking at her — a kind look, that she might well trust.

"Child," he said, "you don't know what you are talking about — and I do. And if you will not trust me any further than you can see me, you don't deserve to be called Miss Faith any longer! Now don't you think I have a right to get home and attend to my duties?"

She yielded utterly at that, but with a set of her lip which he had never seen before; it was trembling. She was turning to go on, when as if to make amends for that — or to ask for-giveness generally — or to give assurance of the trust he had claimed, — she stretched out her hand to him and went by his help again until the orchard was reached and other eyes might be expected to be on the look-out for them.

"Do you like to read letters written from other countries by people you have never seen?" Mr. Linden said when they reached that point.

Faith's eyes opened slightly as was their way when suddenly astonished, and a little colour started too, of surprise or pleasure.

"I never did read any," she said, — "I *should* like it."

"Well, Miss Faith, I think Mrs. Derrick and Reuben can manage that brown horse — especially as he has had no oats to-day — and I want you to take possession of the whole of the back seat, put yourself in a comfortable position, and spend the rest of the daylight in Italy with my sister. When it gets dark you may go to sleep. And here is the talismanic paper by whose help you must make the journey."

What a colour thanked him! what a rosy flush of pleasure and gratitude! To *say* 'thank you' Faith nearly forgot. But it was said.

There was no more delay of any kind after that. Wagons were ready, and baskets, and boys; also Mrs. Derrick; and Faith was ready first of all. So the two parties, now getting under weigh, went fairly homewards, by an evening sky and a night full of stars. Only one incident need be recorded.

The ferry was passed, and four of the six miles between that and the central town of Pattaquasset, when Mr. Linden suddenly checked his horses. Turning half round, and laying a pretty imperative hand on the collar of Phil Davids, he dropped him outside the wagon — like a walnut from its husk — remarking that he had seen enough of him for one day, and did not wish to hear of him again till next morning.

CHAPTER XI.

Little Charles twelfth did not come to meet his Sunday school teacher, as had been arranged, the Sunday preceding the Neanticut expedition. Faith waited for him in the morning — waited and hoped, — but was not greatly surprised to find that she had waited in vain. Charles the twelfth, whether or not he was to follow during life the erratic and wilful course of his namesake, was that day at least not to be led by her.

So Faith went to church, meditating a sometime descent upon Mrs. Seacomb's shady domain, there to meet and recapture the heart of her little charge. For so he seemed to her now. But on her return from the morning service, she found Charles the twelfth, crest-fallen and repentant, in his turn waiting for her. The matter was, his brother Americus Vespucius had shut him up, so that he couldn't come; and as soon as he was set free Charles the twelfth had used his freedom and his legs in 'making tracks,' to use Mr. Simlins' expression, for Mrs. Derrick's abode; and on this occasion he had made many fewer 'tracks' than the afternoon of his previously recorded invasion; as being somewhat burdened in spirit he had stopped for no somersets, and had been lured aside by no tempting invitations of a dusty place or a mudpuddle.

Faith heard his story gravely and sympathizingly; comforted him up; encouraged him to hope that the discoverer of America would not prove so adverse to *his* making discoveries another Sunday; gave him a little talk and a good dinner, and sent him home cheerful and determined. The very mood for success; accordingly the next morning after the return from Neanticut, being Sunday, Charles the twelfth presented himself at the house in brave good time; and Faith and her little charge, for the first time in their lives both of them, went to Sunday school. The child very important and expectant; the teacher very gentle and very grave indeed.

Faith had made her arrangements the Sunday before; so she and Charles twelfth proceeded at once to the place assigned her. At the opening services the king of Sweden stared mightily. Faith looked at nothing. She had a feeling that other children and other teachers were nearer to her than she wished they were; and she was a little uncertain how best to take hold of the odd little piece of humanity intrusted to her care. However, when the reading and the singing were over Faith began a long low talk to him about some Bible story, diverging as she went on to an account of the other world, and the two ways that lead to it, and the two sorts of people that travel them. And becoming exceedingly in-

terested herself, she fastened the eyes of Charles the twelfth in a way that shewed his thoughts were cleaving to hers. Faith's own thoughts were cleaving elsewhere. The things she said were simply said; her words were the plainest; her illustrations just at his hand; but the voice in which they were given would alone have won the ear of a child; and whatever other impression her words made upon his mind, the fixed conclusion in which he was left at the ending was, that whatever way *she* was travelling was the right one!

It was a beautiful fair first of October; still and sunny; but if it had not, it would probably have been a fair day to Faith after that beginning of it. She looked as if it was, in the church, and on the way home, and at the quiet dinner table; her face was a transcript of the day; still and sunny. It seemed to be true, her promise that the annoyance of yesterday would be nothing to her to-day. There was no shadow of it in sight. If there was a shadow anywhere at the table, it was upon Mrs. Derrick, — a half jealous fear that her child would be less hers by becoming a Christian — a half uneasy feeling of the new state of things, did cloud her heart a little, though almost unknown to herself. She would not have confessed to any such cloud — and practically it was not there: no straw of hindrance did she put in Faith's way; indeed she seemed rather fearful of touching the matter in any wise. It was rather from curiosity than anything else, that she said — as they were both getting ready for afternoon church,

"Well child, how did you like going to Sunday school?"

Faith's answer was subdued, but earnest. "I liked it very much, mother."

"How many's in your class?" said Mrs. Derrick, tying her bonnet.

"Only one yet — but that was enough for me to begin with. — I hope I shall get some more soon."

"Only one!" said Mrs. Derrick — "besides you, do you mean, child?"

"Mother!" — said Faith. Then smiling she added, "Yes,

mother — only one besides me. That one is little Charley Seacomb — and I am trying to teach him."

"Why I thought you were in Mr. Linden's class!" said Mrs. Derrick, facing round.

But Faith's face flushed, and what was very uncommon with her, the tears came too.

"So I am, mother," she said; — "but I am one that he teaches at home. I have learned all I know from him," she said, covering her eyes with both hands.

"Why child, hush!" said her mother softly — "I didn't mean to say anything, — how should I know? So you're teaching Charley Seacomb, hey? — well I'm sure he wants it bad enough. I guess I'd better go too, next Sabbath, — it was real lonesome with you all gone. And that makes me think, child — I wonder if you could go a little way for me after meeting?"

"Go to Sunday school, mother!" said Faith shewing her bright wet eyes. "Will you teach some children, mother?"

Written letters don't give the intonation of these words.

"I guess they could teach me, some of 'em," said her mother. "But I thought maybe, Faith, you'd take Sally Loundes some medicine — she sent word for it, and I don't know as I can get so far to-day. Mr. Linden does have a class, don't he?"

"I can go just as well as not, and like it very much, mother. O yes — he has a class of course — a class of some of the biggest boys — a large class."

"I wonder what *he* does with himself after meeting," said Mrs. Derrick. "Folks do say he goes strolling round, but I don't believe it."

"Mother! Folks say everything, I believe. He knows what he does."

"Maybe *you* wouldn't like to be seen out on Sabbath?" said Mrs. Derrick, with sudden thought. "Because if you wouldn't, Faith, I'll go myself to Sally's — can or no can."

"No, mother —" she said brightly, — "I would like to go. If I know I am doing right, I don't mind about being seen. I

wish people had as good reason for telling tales about me, as they have for some others."

"I guess your class 'll fill up, —" said her mother, with her fond, wistful look at the only thing she had in the world.

It was the fairest, still, sweet afternoon, when after church Faith got the medicine for Sally Loundes and set out to take it to her. So fair and lovely, that Faith hardly considered much the features of the road she travelled; in that light any piece of ground was beautiful. The road was very lonely after a little part of the village had been gone through. It left the main street, then bid farewell to a few scattering distant houses and approached what was called Barley Point; — a barren piece of ground from which a beautiful view of the Sound and the ocean line, and perhaps porpoises, could be had. But at the foot of this field the road turned, round the end of that belt of woods spoken of; and getting on the other side of it ran back eastward towards the Lighthouse point. Between the woods and the sea, on this side, was a narrow down that the farmers could make little of; and here the road, if desolate, had a beauty of its own. On Faith's right was this strip of rolling downs, grown with nothing but short grass and low blackberry vines; and close at hand, just beyond its undulating line, the waves of the sea beating in. Very little waves to-day, everything was so quiet.

At the Lighthouse point, a mile or more on, was a little settlement of fishermen and others; but only one house stood on the way, and that hardly disturbed the monotony or the solitude; it was so little, so brown, and looked so of a piece with the barren country. That was Sally Loundes' house. Faith met nobody till she got there.

When Faith came out of the house, the sun's place warned her she would have no time to spare to get home. She set off with quicker pace, though nowise concerned about it. There was no danger of anything in Pattaquasset. But she had gone only a little part of her wild homeward way when she met Mr. Simlins. Now Mr. Simlins was accustomed to take an afternoon Sunday stroll and sometimes a long one; so it was

no matter of surprise to meet him, nor even to meet him there, for Mr. Simlins was as independent in his choice of a walk as in everything else. But *he* was surprised.

"Hullo! my passenger pigeon," he exclaimed. "Why are you here all alone, in this unfrequent place?"

"It's a very nice place," said Faith. "And it's not disagreeable to be alone — though I am willing to meet you, Mr. Simlins."

"Haven't been quarrelling with anybody, have you?"

"No," said Faith, giving an amused look to this view of the subject. "Do I look quarrelsome, Mr. Simlins?"

"I don't know how you look!" said the farmer. "I aint anything of an exposition. You'll have to ask somebody else. There's some words too hard for me to spell and pro-nounce. Where have you been?"

"Just to carry Sally Loundes some medicine mother had for her."

"Where are you goin' now?"

"Home."

"Goin' alone?"

"Why, yes. Why not?"

"Don' know," said Mr. Simlins, — "only I'm going part way, and I'll see nothin' happens to you as long as *I*'m in your consort."

It was a wild place enough to make company pleasant. Dark clumps of forest-trees on one hand grew near together, and the spaces between, though cleared, looked hardly less wild; for vines and sumach and ferns had taken possession. The sun's rays yet lay warm on the rolling downs, the sere grass and the purplish blackberry vines, and sparkled on the waves beyond; but when Mr. Simlins and Faith struck into the woods for a 'short cut,' the shadowy solitude closed them in on all sides. Softly their steps moved over the fallen pine leaves, or rustled through the shreds of autumn finery that lay beneath oak and maple, and nothing else but birds and squirrels broke the stillness till they were near the further edge of the wood. There they heard a soft murmur of voices.

"Who lives here?" said Mr. Simlins.

But Faith held her breath.

"There's mortality here, where I thought there was nothing but animals and vegetation," said Mr. Simlins stepping softly and cautiously forward. "Let's see — don't make no noise more'n the leaves 'll let you. I shouldn't think anything would come to a meetin' here but a wood-chuck — and they're skeered if they see a shadow."

On that side the trees ceased abruptly, and the open sunshine of a little clearing replaced them; and there were the speakers.

Tallest among the group sat Mr. Linden, and around him — in various attitudes of rest or attention — a dozen boys basked in the sunshine. Most of them were a size or two smaller than his morning class at the Sunday school, though several of those were stretched on the grass at the outskirts of the circle, as honorary members. Little Johnny Fax, established in Mr. Linden's lap, divided his attention pretty evenly between the lesson and the teacher; though indeed to his mind the separate interests did not clash.

The little glade was very green still, but sprinkled with the autumn leaves which came floating down at every breath; and the bordering trees stood some in deep green hemlock and some in paler pine, and thrust out here and there a glowing arm into the sunlight. The boys — listening and looking, — some playing the part of young Nebuchadnezzars, some picking and breaking up the asters and golden rod within their reach, — giving little side nods of assent to each other, or bending a more earnest gaze on Mr. Linden; pushing back their caps — or pulling them down with a quick brush across the eyes; — the hand with which Johnny Fax stroked back from Mr. Linden's forehead any stray lock of hair which the wind displaced, or laid on his shoulder when there was nothing else to do; — made altogether a picture the like of which Mr. Simlins had not seen before — nor even Faith. The sun might leave the clearing and betake itself to the tree-tops, and

thence to the clouds, — there was light there which came from a higher source.

Not Faith's silent attention was more silent and motionless than that of her companion; he did not move or stir. But her deep, deep, rapt gravity formed part of the subject of his contemplations, for one or two keen sidelong glances fell upon it. Else, his eyes were busy uninterruptedly with the scene and took in the whole effect of it; hers hardly wavered from one point.

A little stir among the boys roused both the lookers-on from their muse; but they stood still again at the first notes of a hymn — as Mr. Linden's deep voice began, and the young choir with its varied treble chimed in.

"I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand;
There, right before my Saviour,
So glorious and so bright,
I'd wake the sweetest music,
And praise him day and night.

"I never should be weary,
Nor ever shed a tear,
Nor ever know a sorrow,
Nor ever feel a fear;
But blessed, pure, and holy,
I'd dwell in Jesus' sight,
And with ten thousand thousand
Praise him both day and night.

"I know I'm weak and sinful,
But Jesus will forgive,
For many little children,
Have gone to heaven to live.
Dear Saviour, when I languish,
And lay me down to die,
Oh send a shining angel
To bear me to the sky!

"Oh there I'll be an angel,
And with the angels stand!
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand.

And there before my Saviour,
So glorious and so bright,
I'll wake the sweetest music,
And praise him day and night!"

The two listeners stood still while the hymn was singing, still as the air; but Mr. Simlins got no more sight of Faith's face. They stood still when the hymn was finished, as if they lingered where the last vibrations had been. But as a general stir among the hymn party proclaimed that they would soon be on the move, the two who had watched them, as if by consent, turned short about and silently picked their way back through the darkening wood to the nearest point of road they could reach. It was far from home, and even out of the wood the light was failing; they walked with quick steps. Mr. Simlins could get glances now at Faith's face, but though it was quiet enough, he seemed for some reason or other in a disagreeable state of mind. It made itself manifest at length in a grunt of considerable power.

"Ugh! — this is a complexious sort of a world to live in!" — was his not very clear remark. The contrast of the tone of the next words was striking.

"Dear Mr. Simlins, there is something better."

"What do you call me 'dear' for?" growled he. "You never did before."

"I don't know," said Faith. "Because I want you to be as happy as I am."

"Be you so happy?" said the farmer inquisitively.

Faith said yes. It was a calm and clear yes; a confident yes; one that felt its foundations strong and deep; yet Faith's mother or dearest friend, if gifted with quick apprehensions, would hardly have been satisfied with it. Was Mr. Simlins so gifted?

"Not so happy you couldn't be happier?" he said in a tone that assumed it.

"No," said Faith, looking at him with a sunshiny smile; — "I want to be better, Mr. Simlins."

"Better!" — growled Mr. Simlins. "You go hang your-

self! — I wish you *was* better. If you aint happy — I wish the Simlins' may be — an extant race!"

The extraordinary combination of wishes in this speech took away Faith's breath for an answer. She waited for something more.

"What was that fellow doing there?" growled the farmer after a while.

"I suppose he was teaching Sunday school," Faith said after a little hesitation.

"Why, is one to be forever teaching Sunday school?" said the farmer in a discontented tone.

"Why not?" said Faith, — "as long as there are people to be taught?"

"Don't you want to take hold and teach me now?" said Mr. Simlins.

Faith did not know at all what to make of this question; and before she had found an answer that would do, she was saved making any. For Mr. Linden, with even brisker steps than theirs, came up behind them; and after a bright "Good evening, Mr. Simlins," uttered a somewhat surprised "Miss Faith!"

"Yes," said Mr. Simlins, "here she is; and I'm goin' along to see that nothing happens to her. She goes to take care o' somebody else, — and I come after to take care o' her; so we go. We all give each other a deal o' trouble in this world!"

"Am I expected to take care of you, Mr. Simlins, by the same rule? — I came after."

"Well! — I don't know," said the farmer. "I guess there'll be nobody to take care of me. I'm past taking care of."

"What does that mean?" said Mr. Linden.

"How would you like the job?" said Mr. Simlins. "Think it 'ud be easy?"

"Why I should like to know a little more about the job before I express any opinion."

"I have an opinion," said Mr. Simlins, "that you don't know much o' farming. Guess it's correct, aint it?"

"What kind of farming?" inquired Mr. Linden again.

"I don't know more'n one kind. Tillin' the earth, to bring out the produce of it."

"I have seen something of another kind," said Mr. Linden; "it is this: — 'Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he return and rain righteousness upon you.' "

Mr. Simlins wasn't quick to answer that, and there was silence for a minute or two, only broken by their footsteps.

"Well —" he said slowly at length, — "suppos'n a piece o' ground bears as good a crop as it has soil for, hadn't you ought to be contented with it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Linden; "but I never saw such a piece of ground, yet."

Mr. Simlins paused.

"Do you believe some folks can be better than they air already?" he asked.

"I believe all folks can."

"You believe in cameras, then. How're you goin' to work?"

"To make people better? — set them to work for themselves, if I can."

"What sort o' ploughs and harrows would you want 'em to take hold of?"

"They'll find out, when they set to work in earnest to make the ground yield the right sort of fruit," said Mr. Linden.

"What do you call the right sort?" said the farmer, now thoroughly engaged. "Aint as good as a man can do, the right sort?"

"Why yes," said Mr. Linden again, "but I tell you I never saw that sort of fruit ripe — and I'm not sure that I ever shall in this world. For the best fruit that the ground can yield, includes not only the best seed and cultivation, but the perfect keeping down of every weed, and the unchecked receiving of all sweet heavenly influences."

"That's a camera!" said Mr. Simlins something shortly. "You can't have all that in *this* world."

"The fact that people cannot be perfect in this world, does not hinder their being better than they are."

"Well, I say, how're you goin' to work to make it, when they're doin' the best they *can* do, already?"

"Who is?"

"I am inclined to be of the opinion you air," said Mr. Simlins slowly. "I won't say I be — but I don't know how to do no better."

"Thank you, Mr. Simlins —" was the somewhat sorrowful reply, — "you may see what I do, but you do not see what I know. And for you, my friend — pray to know! — there can be no mistakes in the advice that comes from heaven."

There was a minute's silence, till they came to a turning.

"I'd be glad to see you," said Mr. Simlins in a somewhat lowered tone, — "ary one of you — down to my house, any time. *You* can take care of her the rest of the way. Good night!" —

He turned off abruptly down a road that led his way.

They had been walking with slackened steps during this conversation, and the lingering memory of it still checked the pace of the two now left together:

> "Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
> They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,"

had all retreated. And when Mr. Linden spoke, it was not in his own words.

> " 'I thank thee, uncreated Sun,
> That thy bright beams on me have shined!
> I thank thee, who hast overthrown
> My foes, and healed my wounded mind!
> I thank thee, whose enlivening voice
> Bids my freed heart in thee rejoice!
>
> " 'Thee will I love, my joy, my crown!
> Thee will I love, my Lord, my God!
> Thee will I love — beneath thy frown
> Or smile, thy sceptre or thy rod!
> What though my flesh and heart decay
> Thee shall I love in endless day!

The silence of the evening fell again unbroken. Unless a breath caught somewhat interruptedly — so gentle a break — might be said to break it. Faith said nothing, except by that caught breath. Mr. Linden's step was the only one heard. Silently then he gave her his arm, and they went on at a quicker pace.

After a while Faith broke the silence. She spoke in a very quiet voice; as if choosing her words; and hesitated a little sometimes as if timidity checked her.

"Mr. Linden, I want to ask you about something that troubles me — I don't know what is right. I know I know very little — I know I cannot say much or can't say it well — but I feel sometimes as if I must speak to everybody I can reach, and tell them what I do know, and beg them to be safe and happy. And then something tells me that if I do so, people will think me crazy, or be offended, — that it is not my business and I can't do it well and that I had better not try to do it at all. — Is that 'something' right or wrong?"

"'Let him that heareth, say Come,'" Mr. Linden replied. "It is part of the sailing orders of every Christian to speak every other vessel that he can, — which does not mean that he should go out of his own proper course to meet them, nor that he should run them down when met."

"Nor, I suppose," said Faith, "that he should trouble himself about his voice being very low or very hoarse. I thought so. Thank you, Mr. Linden."

"The voice of true loving interest is generally sweet — and rarely gives offence," he said. "If people never spoke of religious things but from the love of them, there would be an end to cant and bad taste in such matters."

She said no more.

"How does Charles twelfth behave?" said Mr. Linden as they neared home. "Has he 'reacted' again — or does he give you both hands full?"

"He behaved nicely!" said Faith. "As to filling my hands, I suppose they wouldn't hold a great deal to-day; but I hope to have them fuller before long."

"Then I may send you another scholar?"

"O yes!" said Faith. "Have you one for me?"

"Perhaps two, if circumstances make my hands too full."

"Do I know them?"

"I am not sure how well, nor whether you know them at all by name; but you will like to teach them for different reasons. At least I have."

"I don't know" — said Faith. "If you have taught them, Mr. Linden, they will be very sorry to come to me!"

"Then you may have the pleasure of making them glad."

She laughed a little, but soberly; and they reached their own gate.

It was past the usual Sunday tea time; and soon the little party were gathered at that pleasantest, quietest of tea-tables — that which is spread at the close of a happy Sunday. It had been such to two at least of the family sitting there, albeit Faith's brow was unusually grave; and it had not been *un*-happy to Mrs. Derrick. She entered, by hope and sympathy, too earnestly and thoroughly into everything that concerned Faith — rested too much of her everyday life upon her, to be unhappy when *she* smiled.

After tea, as he often did, Mr. Linden went out again; and the two were left alone. Mrs. Derrick occupied herself with reading in the old family Bible, where she turned over leaf after leaf; but Faith, on a low seat, sat looking into the remains of the little fire which had been kindled in the supper room. Looking at the glowing coals and grey flickering ashes, with a very grave, meditative, thoughtful gaze.

"Mother —" she said at length, turning her face towards Mrs. Derrick's Bible.

"Well child?" said her mother a little abstractedly.

"I wish, mother, you would ask Mr. Linden to read and pray at night — and let Cindy and Mr. Skip come in?"

"Why Faith!" said Mrs. Derrick, now fully roused, — "how you talk, child! Wish I'd do this, and wish I'd let 'tother — don't I let you and Mr. Linden do pretty much what you've a mind to?"

It was incomprehensible to Faith that her mother's permission should have to do with any of Mr. Linden's actions; but she merely repeated,

"I wish you'd ask him, mother."

"I guess I will!" said Mrs. Derrick — "when I do you'll know it, and he too. Ask him yourself, pretty child," she added, looking at Faith with a very unbent brow.

"But mother," said Faith with a little tinge in her cheeks, — "it would be much better that you should ask him. You are the person to do it."

"I should like to see you make that out," said Mrs. Derrick. "I don't think I'm such a person at all."

"Only because you are the head of the family, mother," Faith said with a little fainter voice.

"Well, if I'm the head of the family I'll do as I like, for once," said Mrs. Derrick. "I'd like to hear him, I'm sure, child — it would seem like old times, — but I wouldn't ask him, for a kingdom!"

Faith looked at her, half laughing and grave too — but gave up the point, seeing she must.

"And while you're about it, Faith, you can just ask him to make his boys behave. Sam Stoutenburgh did nothing all meeting time but look at you. So I guess the sermon didn't do *him* much good."

Faith went back to the contemplation of the fire. However, she apparently had not made up her mind that *she* was 'the person,' or else was not ready to act upon it; for when Mr. Linden was heard opening the front door Faith ran away, and came down no more that night.

CHAPTER XII.

"It occurs to me, Parson Somers," said that gentleman's lady wife, as she salted and sugared his morning bowl of porridge; "it occurs to me, that Pattaquasset is getting stirred up with a long pole."

"Ah, my dear?" said Mr. Somers — "'Stirred up.' Well — what makes you think so?"

"Why —" said Mrs. Somers tasting the porridge — "Jenny! fetch some more milk. How do you suppose Mr. Somers is going to eat such thick stuff as that? — and when do you suppose he is going to get his breakfast, at this rate? If you let your head run upon Jem Waters in this style, Jenny, I shall forbid him the house. I always notice that the day after he's been here Mr. Somers' porridge is too thick."

"Well, my dear," said the parson, — "ha — the porridge will do very well. I thought you were speaking of Pattaquasset when you spoke of something being 'stirred up.'"

"So I was," said the lady, while Jenny blushing beyond her ordinary peonic hue, ran about in the greatest confusion, catching up first the water pitcher and then the molasses cup. "'Do very well?' — no, indeed it won't! — but men never know anything about housekeeping."

"Well, my dear, but about Pattaquasset? — I know something about Pattaquasset. Is there any trouble in the village? It's a very peaceable place," continued Mr. Somers, looking at his distant breakfast dish, — "always was — ha — I wish you'd let me have my porridge. Is there any trouble, my dear?"

"I can't tell, —" said Mrs. Somers, adding critical drops of milk, — "see for yourself, Mr. Somers. If there isn't, there may be. — One set of things is at sixes, and another at sevens. There — that's better, though it's about as far from perfection as I am."

"We're none of us perfect, and so — ha — my dear, we can't blame the porridge," said Mr. Somers with slight jocularity which pleased at least himself. "But Pattaquasset is about as near the impossible state as most places, that *I* know. What have you heard of, Mrs. Somers? You deal in rather — a — enigmatical construction, this morning."

"Who said I had heard anything?" said the lady, — "I only said, use your eyes, Mr. Somers, — open your study

window and let the light in. Just see what a rumpus we've had about the school, to begin."

"Ha! my dear," said Mr. Somers, "if opening the window of my study is going to let trouble come in, I'd rather — ha — keep it shut! Judge Harrison thinks the teacher is a very fine man — and I've no doubt he is! — and the Judge is going to give him a great celebration. I have no doubt we shall all enjoy it. I think the disturbance that has been made will not give Mr. Linden any more trouble."

"Why who cares about his trouble?" said Mrs. Somers rather briskly, — "I dare say he's very good, Mr. Somers, but I shan't fret over *him*. I'm not sure but he's a little *too* good for my liking — I'm not sure that it's quite natural. Jenny! fetch some more biscuit! — how long do you suppose Mr. Somers and I can live upon one?"

Parson Somers eat porridge and studied the philosophy of Mrs. Somers' statements.

"My dear," said he at length, — "I am not sure that you are correct in your view — indeed it seems to me — a — rather contradictory. I don't know what the stir is about; and I don't think there is any occasion, my dear, for you — a — to fret, about anything. Not about Mr. Linden, certainly. The disaffection to the new school was — a — confined to very few! I don't think it has taken root in the public mind generally. You will be better able to form a judgment on Thursday."

"Bless your heart! Mr. Somers," said his wife, "what's Thursday to do? If you think I've said all I *could* say — why there's no help for it. Now there's Sam Deacon — don't come to meeting half the time lately, — and to match that, Faith Derrick walks into Sunday school with one of those Seacomb children tagging after her."

"Well," said Mr. Somers looking exceedingly mystified, — "what's the harm in that? If Miss Faith chooses to do it, it shews, I am sure, a — a charitable disposition, — praiseworthy!"

"Mr. Somers!" — said the lady. "Is it possible you can

think for one moment that I mean what you mean? If she came to Society too, I should know what to make of it, but when people work alongside of some folks, and not alongside of others, why it's as long as it's broad. Then Maria Davids says she drove those boys over to Neanticut 'tother day — or helped drive 'em. What do you think of that, Mr. Somers?"

Mr. Somers looked as if his wife was too fast for him.

"My dear," said he however, plucking up, — "I think I would trust Faith Derrick as soon as Maria Davids, or — any other young lady in Pattaquasset! If she did go to Neanticut I presume it was all as it should be. Squire Deacon never was — a — very remarkable for being a religious man or anything like that; and you can't help folks working alongside of each other — they will do it," said Mr. Somers relapsing into his jocular mood. "I am a man of peace, my dear, and you should be a woman of peace."

"Why you don't suppose I believed what Maria Davids said?" replied Mrs. Somers. "Her words are not worth their weight in gold — and she isn't a bit too good to be jealous. But the thing is, if Faith didn't do that, what *did* she do? Jenny! fetch in the tub of hot water, and be spry!"

With Jenny and the hot water walked in a somewhat rough-looking boy, who declared without much ceremony, beyond doffing his cap, that "'ma sent him to find out where the sewin' meetin' was to be this week."

"Who are you?" said Mrs. Somers, dipping a cup in the hot water and wiping it with a 'spryness' that was quite imposing. "Is your name Bill Wright?"

"No 'taint," said the boy. "Guess again."

"You'll never pay anybody for much trouble that way," said Mrs. Somers dipping in the corresponding saucer. "Jenny — did you ever hear of anybody's getting along in a dish-tub without a mop?"

"Who is it wants to know, sir?" said Mr. Somers politely. "Who is your father?"

"He's farmer Davids."

"Oh! and are you Phil?"

"Yes! What be I goin' to tell her?" — This interrogatory being sent in the direction of the dish-tub.

"Why you can tell her two things," said Mrs. Somers, eying Phil from head to foot. "In the first place, the Society'll meet down at Miss Bezac's; and in the second, as soon as your mother'll teach her children how to behave themselves I shall be very glad to see them."

"The Society'll meet down to Miss Purcell's?"

"Miss Bezac's" — said Mrs. Somers, preserving a cheerful and brisk equanimity in the midst of her sharp words that was quite delightful. "Pay more attention to your lessons, Phil Davids, and you'll be a better boy, if you look sharp."

"What lessons?" said the boy blackly.

"All you get — at home and abroad. You go to school I fancy," replied Mrs. Somers.

The boy glanced toward the clock and began to move off, answering by actions rather than words.

"You were over at Neanticut, I suppose, Saturday," said Mr. Somers affably. To which the answer was a choked and unwilling 'yes.'

"Well who drove you over?"

"He druv," said Phil. "I'm going —"

"And the ladies — weren't there ladies along?"

"Yes — They druv too."

"Did you have a fine time?" said Mrs. Somers.

"Yes! *I* did," said Phil very gloomily.

"Why what did you do more than the rest?"

"I didn't do nothing!" said Phil, blurting out, — "and he went and took all my nuts away. He's the devil!"

The boy looked at the minute as if he was a young one.

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Somers. "You — you oughtn't to speak that way — don't you know? it's not proper."

"I hope he boxed your ears first," said Mrs. Somers — "I'm certain you deserved it. What made him take your nuts away?"

"He wanted 'em to make a present to you" — said the boy; and with another glance at the hands of the clock, he darted out of the house and down the road towards the schoolhouse, as if truly he had expected to meet there the character he had mentioned.

"My dear —" said Mr. Somers — "do you think it is quite — a — politic, to tell Mrs. Davids she don't bring up her children right? Mrs. Davids is a very respectable woman — and so is Farmer Davids — none more so."

"I don't know what you call respectable women —" said Mrs. Somers — "I should be sorry to think *he* was. But I just wish, Mr. Somers, that you would preach a sermon to the people about cutting off their children's tongues if they can't keep them in order. I declare! I could hardly keep hands off that boy."

And with this suggested and suggestive text, Mr. Somers retired to his study.

It had been a busy day with more than Mr. Somers, when towards the close of the afternoon Faith came out upon the porch of her mother's house. She had not read more than one delicious bit of her letter on the ride home from Neanticut; the light failed too soon. After getting home there was no more chance. Saturday night, that Saturday, had a crowd of affairs. And Monday had been a day full of business. Faith had got through with it all at last; and now, as fresh as if the kitchen had been a bygone institution — though that was as true of Faith in the kitchen as out of it — she sat down in the afternoon glow to read the letter. The porch was nice to match; she took a low seat on the step, and laying the letter in her lap rested her elbow on the yellow floor of the porch to take it at full ease.

It was not just such a letter as is most often found in biographies, — yet such as *may* be found — 'out of print.' A bright medley of description and fancy — mountains and legends and scraps of song forming a mosaic of no set pattern. And well-read as the writer was in other respects, it was plain that she was also learned in both the books Faith had had at

Neanticut. The quick flow of the letter was only checked now and then by a little word-gesture of affection, — if that could be called a check, which gave to the written pictures a better glow than lit up the originals.

It was something to see Faith read that letter — or would have been, if anybody had been there to look. She leaned over it in a sort of breathless abstraction, catching her breath a little sometimes in a way that told of the interest at work. The interest was not merely what would have belonged to the letter for any reader, — it was not merely the interest that attached to the writer of it, nor to the person for whom it was written; it was not only the interest deep and great which Faith felt in the subjects and objects spoken of in the letter. All these wrought with their full power; but all these were not enough to account for the intent and intense feeling with which Faith bent over that letter, with eyes that never wavered, and a cheek in which the blood mounted to a bright flush. And when it was done, even then she sat still leaning over the paper looking not at it but through it.

A little shower of fringed gentian and white Ladies' tresses came patting down upon the letter, hiding its delicate black marks with their own dainty faces.

"These are your means of transport back to Pattaquasset," said Mr. Linden. Faith looked up, and rose up.

"I had come back," she said, drawing one of those half long breaths as she folded up and gave him the letter. "I can't thank you, Mr. Linden."

"I thought you were not reading, or I should not have ventured such an interruption. But I am in no hurry for the letter, Miss Faith. How do you like Italy?"

"I like it —" said Faith doubtfully, — "I don't know it. Mr. Linden," she went on with some difficulty and flushing yet more, — "some time, will you tell me in what books I can find out about those things? — those things the letter speaks of."

"Those which concern Italy, do you mean! I can arrange

an Italy shelf for you up stairs — but I am afraid I have not very much here to put on it."

"No indeed!" said Faith looking half startled, — "I didn't mean to give you trouble — only some time, if you would tell me what books — perhaps —"

"Perhaps what?" he said smiling, — "perhaps I wouldn't?"

"No," she said, "I mean, perhaps you *would;* and perhaps I could get them and read them. I feel I don't know anything."

That Faith felt it was very plain. She had that rare beauty — a soft eye. I do not mean the grace of insipidity, nor the quality of mere form and colour; but the full lustrous softness that speaks a character strong in the foundations of peace and sweetness. Many an eye can be soft by turns and upon occasion; it is rarely that you see one where sweetness and strength have met together to make that the abiding characteristic. The gentleness of such an eye has always strength to back it. Weakness could never be so steadfast; poverty could not be so rich. And Faith's eye shewed both its qualities now.

Mr. Linden merely repeated, "I will arrange it for you — and you can take the books in what order you like. Perhaps I can send you another journey when they are exhausted," he added, turning the letter softly about, as if the touch were pleasant to him. She stood looking at it.

"I don't know how to thank you for letting me read that," she said. "It would be foolish in me to tell you how beautiful I thought it."

"*She* is —" her brother said, with a tender, half smiling half grave expression. And for a minute or two he was silent — then spoke abruptly.

"Miss Faith, what have you done with your 'Philosophe'? You know, though the rooms in the great Temple of Knowledge be so many that no one can possibly explore them all, yet the more keys we have in hand the better. For some locks yield best to an English key, some to a French; and

it is often pleasant to take a look where one cannot go in and dwell."

She flushed a good deal, with eyes downcast as she stood before him; then answered, with that odd little change of her voice which told of some mental check,

"I haven't done anything with it, Mr. Linden."

"That requires explanation."

"It isn't so hard as one of your puzzles," she said smiling. "I mean to do something with it, Mr. Linden, if I can; and I thought I would try the other day; but I found I didn't know enough to begin — to learn that yet."

"What other key are you forging?"

"What *other* key?" said Faith.

"I mean," he answered with a tone that shewed a little fear of going too far, "what do you want to learn before that?"

"I don't know," said Faith humbly. — "I suppose, English. It was a grammar of yours, Mr. Linden, a French grammar, that I was looking at; and I found I couldn't understand what it was about, anywhere. So I thought I must learn something else first."

"Never was philosopher so put in a corner!" said Mr. Linden. "Suppose you take up him and the dictionary and let me be the grammar — do you think you could understand what I was about?"

The blood leapt to her cheek; part of her answer Faith had no need to put in words, even if he had not seen her eyes, which he did. The words were not in any hurry to come.

"When you have been teaching all day already" — she said in a tone between regretful and self-reproving. "It wouldn't be right."

"Mayn't I occasionally do wrong? — just for variety's sake!"

"*You* may — and I don't doubt you would. I was thinking of my own part."

"I am glad you don't say you have no doubt I *do*," said

Mr. Linden. "I suppose you mean that I would if sufficient temptation came up, which of course it never has."

Faith looked an instant, and then her gravity broke up. "Ah, but you know what I mean," she said.

"You will have to furnish *me* with a dictionary next," he said smiling. "Look at my watch — Miss Faith, how can you have tea so late, when I have been teaching all day? — it isn't right, — and cuts off one's time for philosophizing besides."

Faith ran into the house, to tell the truth, with a very pleased face; and tea was on the table in less time than Cindy could ever understand. But during tea-time Faith looked, furtively, to see if any signs were to be found that little Johnny Fax had been made to yield up his testimony. Wether he had or no, she could see none; which however, as she justly concluded with herself, proved nothing.

The new grammar was far easier understood than the old. Although Mr. Linden unfolded his newspaper, and informed Faith that he intended to read 'uninterruptedly' — so that she 'need feel no scruple about interrupting him' — yet he probably had the power of reading two things at once; for his assistance was generally given before it was asked. His explanations too, whether Faith knew it or not, covered more ground than the *French* exigency absolutely required, — he was not picking this lock for her, but giving her the grammar key.

But Faith knew it and felt it; and tasted the help thus given, with an appreciation which only it needed to do all its work; the keen delight of one seeking knowledge, who has never been helped and who has for the first time the right kind of help. Indeed, with the selfishness incident to human nature, she forgot all about Mr. Linden's intention to read uninterruptedly, and took without scruple or question, all the time he bestowed upon her. And it was not till some minutes after she had closed her books, that her low, grateful "You are very good, Mr. Linden!" reached his ear.

Now the fact was, that Faith had been much observed that

afternoon, — her reading-dream on the steps had been so pretty a thing to see, that when Squire Deacon had seen it once he came back to see it again; and what number of views he would have taken cannot be told, had he not been surprised by Mr. Linden. Naturally the Squire withdrew, — naturally his enlarged mind became contracted as he thought of the cause thereof; and not unnaturally he walked down that way after tea, still further to use his eyes. The house was in a tantalizing state. For though the light curtain was down, it revealed not only the bright glow of the lamp, but one or two shadowy heads; and the window being open (for the evening was warm) low voices, that he loved and that he did not love, came to his ear. Once a puff of wind floated the curtain in — more tantalizing than ever! Squire Deacon could see Mr. Linden bending aside to look at something, but *what* the Squire could not see; for there came the edge of the curtain. In a warm state of mind he turned his face homewards, proclaiming to himself that he didn't care what they did! — the result of which was, that in ten minutes more he was knocking at Mrs. Derrick's door, and being promptly admitted by Cindy entered the parlour just as Faith had shut up her book and uttered her soft word of thanks.

It was something of a transition! But after a moment's shadow of surprise on her face, Faith came forward and gave the Squire her hand. She would have let him then explain his own errand; but as he did not seem very ready to do that, or to say anything, Faith stepped into the breach.

"How is Cecilia, Mr. Deacon? I have not seen her in a long time."

"She's firstrate," said the Squire, colouring up; for Mr. Linden's "how do you do *again*, Squire Deacon?" not only implied that they had lately met, but that the occasion was not forgotten.

"It's a sort of suffocating evening," added the Squire, wiping his forehead. "I don't recollect so warm an October for a year or two. Cilly's been out of town, Miss Faith, and since she come back she's been complainin' of *you*."

Faith was near saying that she hoped the warm weather would last till Thursday; but she remembered that would not do, and changed her ground.

"I am sorry anybody should complain of me. Is that because I didn't go to see her when she was away?"

"I'm sure the rest of us could have stood it, if you *had* come when she was gone, Miss Faith," said the Squire gallantly. "Seems to me we haven't seen you down to our house for an age of Sundays."

"I will try to come of a week day," said Faith. "I think you never saw me there Sunday, Mr. Deacon."

"I suppose an age of Sundays must be seven times as long as any other age," said Mr. Linden. "Isn't that the origin of the phrase, Squire Deacon?"

"Very like," said the Squire — who didn't care to be interrupted. "I don't know much about originals, — when a man has a position to fill, sir, he can't study knick-knacks. What a handsome book, Miss Faith! such a becoming colour."

"Don't you like the inside of books too, Mr. Deacon?" said Faith.

"I daresay I should that one," said the Squire, — "the outside's like a picture — or a view, as some people call it. Looks just like a grain field in spring. What's the name of it, Miss Faith?"

Half prudently, half wickedly, Faith without answering took the book from the table and put it in Mr. Deacon's hand.

The Squire's face looked like anything but a grain field in spring then — it was more like a stubble in November; for opening the book midway and finding no help there, he turned to the title page and found the only English words in the book, in very legible black ink.

"So!" he said — "it's his'n, is it!"

"Yes, it is mine," said Mr. Linden, — "almost any man may have so much of a library as that."

The Squire glanced suspiciously at Faith, as if he still be-

lieved she had something to do with it; but he did not dare press the matter.

"Miss Faith," he said, calling up a smile that was meant to do retrospective work, "have you heard tell of the queer things they've found down to Mattabeeset?"

"What things, Mr. Deacon?"

"Some sort o' bird's been makin' tracks down there," said the Squire leaning back in his chair, with the look of one who has now got the game in his own hands; "makin' tracks criss-cross round; and they do say the size on 'em might have come out of the ark, for wonder."

"How large are they, Mr. Deacon? and what sort of bird is it?"

"Well if I was a descendant of Noah, I s'pose I could tell you," said the Squire with increased satisfaction, — "I'm sorry I can't, as it is. But if you're curious, Miss Faith (and ladies always is in my experience) I'll drive you down there any day or any time of day. I want to see 'em myself, that's a fact, and so does Cilly. Now Miss Faith, name the day!"

The shortest possible smile on Mr. Linden's face at this sudden and earnest request, did not help Faith to an answer; but the Squire was happily forgetful for the moment that there were more than two people in the room, and leaning towards Faith he repeated,

"The sooner the quicker, always, in such cases! because folks can never tell what *may* happen."

"No," said Faith, "they cannot — especially about weather; and I have got some particular work to attend to at home, Mr. Deacon, before the weather changes. I wish you and Cecilia would go down and bring us a report. I should like that. But for the present Mr. Skip and I have something to do."

"It's good you want Mr. Skip, for I don't," said the Squire, stiffening a little. "Is that one of the new-fashioned ways of saying you won't go, Miss Faith?"

"What's your objection to Mr. Skip?" said Faith pleasantly. "I am glad nobody else wants him, for *we* do."

"Well, I say I'm glad you've got him," said the Squire, relenting under the power of Faith's voice. "But what ails *you* Miss Faith, to go tackin' round like one o' them schooners against the wind? Aint it a straight question as to whether you'll take an excursion to Mattabeeset?"

"Very straight," said Faith smiling and speaking gently. "And I thought I gave a straight answer."

"Blessed if I can see which road it took!" said Squire Deacon, — "save and except it didn't seem to be the right one. 'No' 's about as ugly a road as a man can foller. Guess I spoke too late, after all," said the Squire meditatively. "How's your furr'n news, Mr. Linden? Get it regular?"

"Yes —" said Mr. Linden, — "making due allowance for the irregularity of the steamers."

Faith looked up in no little astonishment, and took the eye as well as the ear effect of this question and answer; then said quietly,

"Have you any business in the post-office, Mr. Deacon?"

"Not a great deal, Miss Faith," said the Squire, with a blandness on one side of his face which but poorly set off the other. "I go down for the paper once a week, and 'lection times maybe oftener, but I don't do much in the letter line. Correspondence never was my powder magazine. I shouldn't know where to put two or three femi*nine* letters a week — if I got 'em."

If he had got what somebody wanted to give him at that moment! — Squire Deacon little knew what risk he ran, nor how much nearer he was to a powder magazine than he ever had been in his life.

"A sure sign that nobody will ever trouble you in that way," Faith said somewhat severely. But the Squire was obtuse.

"Well I guess likely," he said, "and it's just as good they don't. I shouldn't care about living so fur from anybody I was much tied up in — or tied up *to*, neither. I can't guess, for one, how you make out to be contented here, Mr. Linden."

"How do you know that I do, sir?"

There was a little pause at that — it was a puzzling question to answer; not to speak of a slight warning which the Squire received from his instinct. But the pause was pleasantly ended.

"Faith!" said a gentle voice in the passage — "open the door, child — I've got both hands full."

Which call Mr. Linden appropriated to himself, and not only opened the door but brought in the great dish of smoking chestnuts. Faith ran away to get plates for the party, with one of which in defiance of etiquette she served first Mr. Linden; then handed another to the Squire.

"I hope they are boiled right, Mr. Linden. Have you seen any chestnuts yet this year, Mr. Deacon?"

"I've seen some — but they warn't good for nothing," said the Squire rather sourly. "Thank you, Miss Faith, for your plate, but I guess I'll go."

"Why stay and eat some chestnuts, Squire Deacon!" said Mrs. Derrick. "Those are Neanticut chestnuts—firstrate too."

"I don't like Neanticut chestnuts —" said Squire Deacon rising — "never did, — they're sure to be wormy. Good night, Miss Faith — good night, Mr. Linden. Mrs. Derrick, this room's hot enough to roast eggs."

"Why the windows are open!" said Mrs. Derrick — "and we might have had the curtains drawn back, too, but I always feel as if some one was looking in."

Which remark did not delay the Squire's departure, and Mrs. Derrick followed him to the door, talking all the way.

During which little 'passage' Faith's behaviour again transcended all rules. For she stood before the dish of chestnuts, fingering one or two, with a somewhat unsteady motion of the corners of her mouth; and then put both her hands to her face and laughed, her low but very merriment-speaking laugh.

"Miss Faith," Mr. Linden said, "I think Job was an extraordinary man! — and the chestnuts are not so bad as they are reported, after all."

Faith became grave, and endeavoured to make trial of the chestnuts, without making any answer.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick returning, "I don't think the Squire felt just comfortable — I wonder if he's well?"

Which remark brought down the house.

"By the way —" said Mr. Linden looking up, — "did you lose a bow of ribband from your sunbonnet, the other day at Neanticut?"

Faith owned to having lost it somewhere.

"I found it somewhere —" said Mr. Linden with a rather peculiar look, as he took out the bow of ribband.

"Where did you find it, Mr. Linden?"

"I found it here — in Pattaquasset."

"Where?"

But he shook his head at the question.

"I think I will not tell you — you may lose it again."

And all Faith's efforts could get no more from him.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Thursday of the great school celebration arrived; and according to Faith's unexpressed wish, the weather had continued warm. It was the very luxury of October. A day for all the senses to disport themselves and revel in luxurious beauty. But the mind of Pattaquasset was upon the evening's revel, and upon the beauty of white cambric and blue ribbands. The mind of Faith Derrick was on somewhat else.

"Mother," she said, "do you know there must be a fire up in Mr. Linden's room as soon as the weather gets cold?"

"Of course, child."

"Well there is nothing in the world up there to put wood in."

"It used to lie on the floor —" said Mrs. Derrick, as if the past might possibly help the future. "That does make a muss."

"It's not going to lie on the floor now," said Faith. "I am going to get Mr. Skip to make me a box, a large box, with a

top — and I will cover it with some carpet or dark stuff, if you'll give me some, mother. It must be dark, because the wood of the room is. I am going to stuff the top for a seat, and it will look very nice."

"Anything does that you take hold of," said her mother. "Yes, child, I'll give you all I've got, — you can look for yourself and take what you like best."

The immediate work of the day was to 'clear ship' — in other words, to do all the day's work in the former part thereof, so as to leave time for the unwonted business of the afternoon. Mrs. Derrick even proposed that Faith should get dressed. But Faith said there was time enough after dinner; and that meal was gone through with as usual.

With this slight variation in the table talk. Mr. Linden suggested to Faith the propriety of philosophizing a little, as a preparative for the dissipation of the evening; and declared that for the purpose, he would promise to bring his toilette within as narrow bounds as she did hers.

Faith's face gave answer, in the sort of sparkling of eye and colour which generally met such a proposition, and which to-day was particularly bright with the pleasure of surprise.

"But," she said warningly, "I can dress in *very* few minutes!"

So she did, and yet — and yet, she was dressed from head to foot and to the very point of the little white ruffle round her throat. Hair, bright as her hair was, and in the last degree of nice condition and arrangement, the same perfect presentation of hands and feet and white ruffles as aforesaid; — that was the most of Faith's dressing; the rest was a plain white cambric frock, which had its only setting off in her face and figure. The one touch of colour which it wanted, Faith found when she went down stairs; for upon the basket where 'Le Philosophe' commonly reposed, lay a dainty breast-knot of autumn tints, — fringed gentian with its delicate blue, and oak leaves of the deepest red, and a late rose or two.

It is a pity there was nobody to see Faith's face; for its tints copied the roses. Surprise and doubt and pleasure made

a pretty confusion. She held in her hand the dainty bouquet and looked at it, as if the red leaves could have told her what other hand they were in last; which was what Faith wanted to know.

A step on the porch — a slight knock at the front door, naturally drew her thoughts and feet thither, but whatever Faith expected she did *not* expect to see Sam Stoutenburgh. One might almost go further and say he did not expect to see her, for he gazed at her as if she had been an apparition — only that his face was red instead of white.

"How do you do, Sam," said Faith, coming back a little to everyday life. "Do you want to see Mr. Linden?"

"O no, Miss Faith!" said Sam — as if it were the last thing in the world he wanted to see.

"Well Sam — what then?"

But Sam was slow to say what then — or indeed to say anything; and what would have been his success is to this day unknown, for at that moment Mr. Linden came down stairs.

"Do you want me, Sam?" he said, approaching the front door.

"No, sir," said Sam (playing both parts of an unwilling witness) — "I — I thought you were out, Mr. Linden."

"O —" Mr. Linden said. "I beg your pardon!" And he not only went into the parlour but shut the door after him.

To no purpose! With him went the remnant of Sam Stoutenburgh's courage, if he had had any to begin with, and after one more glance at Faith he fairly turned his back and fled — without striking his colours. Faith went back to the parlour.

"What is the matter with the boy?" she said, "I couldn't get anything out of him, Mr. Linden."

A somewhat peculiar smile came with the words,

"Couldn't you?"

Faith noticed it, but her thought was elsewhere. She came back to the table, took up the flowers, and said a little timidly,

"Do you know who put these here, Mr. Linden?"

The look changed. "I think I do," he said.

Her look did not change, except to a softened reflection of the one with which she had first viewed them. She viewed them still, bending over them doubtfully; then glancing up at him she shook her head and said,

"You are dressed before me, after all, Mr. Linden!"

And ran away. She was back again in three minutes, with the flowers upon her breast; and if there had been but one adornment in the world that would have fitted her just then, the giver of the flowers had found it. Faith had altered nothing, she had only put them in the right place; and the effect was curious in its beauty. That effect of her flowers was probably the only one unknown to Faith herself, though it was with a face blushing with pleasure that she came in and sat gravely down to be a philosopher.

She gave her teacher little trouble, and promised to give him less. She had excellent capacity, that was plain; with the eager desire for learning which makes the most of it; both the power and the will were there to appropriate and use every word of Mr. Linden's somewhat lawless but curiously skilful manner of instructing her. And the simplicity of her attention was perfect. She did not forget her flowers, probably, during this particular page of philosophizing, for a little tinge on her cheek never ceased to speak of pleasure all through the time; but that was the sole sign of distraction, if distraction there were. Less grave, but more intent, than Mr. Linden himself, the information that Mr. Skip had driven the little wagon round before the door, came to her ears all too soon.

The drive to the Judge's was not very long; it might have been three quarters of a mile; so even at the old horse's rate of travelling they were soon there.

Judge Harrison's house was large and old-fashioned, yet had much more style about it than any other house in Pattaquasset pretended to; and the same was true of its arrangements and furniture. It was comfortable and ample; so was everything in it; with besides that touch of ease and fitness

and adaptation which shews always — or generally — that people have lived where there is a freedom from fixed standards. It was so here; for Judge Harrison's family during the life-time of his wife had always spent their winters and often part of their summers away from Pattaquasset — in one of the great cities, New York generally, or at some watering-place. There was also however an amount of good sense and kind temper in the family which made no difference, of intention, between them and the rest of Pattaquasset when they were there; so that they were extremely popular.

Mr. Skip and old Crab were in very good time; there were not more than half assembled of all the good company asked and expected this afternoon. These were all over, in the house and out of the house; observing and speculating. The house was surrounded with pleasant grounds, spreading on two sides in open smooth lawns of considerable extent, and behind the house and the lawns stretching back in a half open shrubbery. On one of the lawns long tables already shewed their note of preparation; on the other there was a somewhat ominous array of benches and chairs; and among them all, round and about everything, scattered the people.

Mrs. Derrick and Faith went upstairs to the unrobing room, where the latter was immediately taken into consultation by Miss Harrison on some matters which promised to keep them both busy for some time. Mr. Linden meanwhile received a very cordial welcome from Judge Harrison, who was cordiality itself.

"Well, Mr. Linden! we've got a good day! Good for the boys and good for us. We've ventured to depart a little from your — instructions! but — I hope — in such a way as not to compromise you. My son and daughter have managed it. I'll introduce him to you" — said the old gentleman looking about, — "but he's somewhere just now."

"I should like to know first, Judge Harrison, what my instructions were," said Mr. Linden, as his eyes likewise made search for the missing doctor.

"O," said the Judge, "all right! I understood your feel-

ings exactly. I used that word because the right one didn't come. I have to do that often. I've heard of the 'pen of a ready writer' — I'm sure I'd rather have the tongue of a ready speaker; but it don't matter for me now. My friends take me as they find me, and so will you, I have little fear. Julius! — Here's my son, Dr. Harrison, Mr. Linden."

Dr. Harrison must have a word of introduction to the reader, though he was one of those who need very little in actual life. He was a handsome man, young but not very young, and came up at his father's call and honoured the introduction to his father's guest, with that easy grace and address which besides being more or less born with a man, tell that much attrition with the world has been at work to take away all his outward roughnesses of nature. He was handsomely dressed too, though not at all in a way to challenge observation. His coat would have startled nobody in Pattaquasset, though it might have told another that its wearer had probably seen France, had probably seen England, and had in short lived much in that kind of society which recognizes the fact of many kinds of coats in the world. His greeting of Mr. Linden was both simple and graceful.

"I am very happy to see you," he said as he shook hands. "I should certainly have come to see you before, but I am more a stranger in Pattaquasset than anybody. I have hardly been at home since I returned; business has drawn me to other quarters — and I am only fortunate enough to be in time for this occasion. It's a good time for me," said he looking round, — "I can renew my old acquaintance with everybody at once — I think all Pattaquasset is here."

"Not grown out of your remembrance, has it?" said Mr. Linden. "How long have you been away?"

"Well — it's had time to grow out of everything! especially out of my memory. I have not been here for five years — and then only for a few days — and before that at College; so I may say I have hardly been here since my boyhood. I don't know anybody but the old ones. I shall apply to you, if you will allow me," said he, drawing himself and Mr. Linden

a little more apart from the centre of reception. "Who, for instance, is that very — well — dressed — young lady just entering the hall? — good-looking too."

The doctor's face was very quiet — so were his words; but his eye was upon Miss Cecilia Deacon, who in a low-necked blue silk, with an amber necklace and jet bracelets, was paying her respects to the Judge and his daughter. With equal quietness Mr. Linden made answer.

"By the way," said the doctor suddenly, "I believe we owe this pleasant occasion — very pleasant I think it is going to be — to you."

"Accidentally and innocently, I assure you."

"Yes — of course," — said Dr. Harrison, with the air of one who needed no information as to Mr. Linden's view of the subject, nor explanation as to its grounds. "But," said he speaking somewhat low, — "my father has the interests of the school — and indeed of all Pattaquasset — truly at heart, and my sister has entered into all his feelings. I am a kind of alien. I hope not to be so. — But, as I was saying, my father and sister putting their heads together, have thought it would have a good effect upon the boys and upon certain interests of the community through them and their parents too, to give some little honours to the best students among them — or to the cleverest boys — which, as you and I know, are not precisely synonymous terms. Would you think well of such an expedient? My father is very anxious to do nothing which shall not quite meet your judgment and wish in the matter."

"I shall leave it in Judge Harrison's hands," said Mr. Linden after a moment's silence: "I should be very sorry to gainsay his wishes in any respect. And some of the boys deserve any honours that can be given them."

"Do they?" said the doctor. "Can you indicate them to me?"

"No," said Mr. Linden smiling. "I shall leave you to find out."

"Leave *me*" — said the other. "How did you know what

office they had charged upon me? Well — I am making as long a speech as if I were a member of Congress. By the way, Mr. Linden, can you imagine what could induce a man to be that particular member of the body politic? it occupies the place of the feet, I think; such members do little but run to and fro — though I remember I just seemed to give them the place of the tongue — unjustly. They don't do the real talk of the world."

"The real *talk?*" said Mr. Linden. "Indeed I think they do their share."

"Of talk?" said the doctor with an acute look at his neighbour. "Well — as I was saying — my sister has provided I believe some red and blue, or red and something, favours of ribband — to be given to the boys who shall merit them. Now to find out that, which you won't tell me, I am to do, under your pleasure, some more talking — to them in public — to see in short how well they can talk to me. Do you like that?"

"Better than they will, perhaps — as merit is sometimes modest."

"I assure you I would happily yield the duty into your hands — who would do it so much better — but I suppose you would say as somebody else — 'Let my friend tell my tale.' — Who is that?" said the doctor slowly and softly, — "like the riding pole of a fence — as little to spare — and as rigid — isn't he? — and as long! Don't I remember him?"

"You ought — that is Mr. Simlins."

"Yes" — said the doctor musingly — "I remember him! I incurred his displeasure once, in some boyish way, and if I recollect he is a man that pays his debts. And that unfortunate — next — looks like the perspective of a woman."

But this lady Mr. Linden did not know. She was little, in form and feature, and had besides a certain *pinched-in* look of diminutiveness — that seemed to belong to mind as well as body, temper, and life — and had procured her the doctor's peculiar term of description.

"The next thing is," said Dr. Harrison, as his eye slowly

roved over the assembled and assembling people —" who is to give the favours? My sister of course does not wish to be forward in the business — and *I* don't — and you don't. *I* say, the prettiest girl here."

"I think the hands that prepared the favours should dispense them," said Mr. Linden.

"But she won't do it — and ladies have sometimes the power of saying no — they're generally persuadable! — Who's that?" said the doctor with a change of tone, touching Mr. Linden's arm, — "the one in white with a red bouquet de corsage — she's charming! She's the one!"

"That is Miss Derrick."

"She'll do," — said the doctor softly to his companion, as Faith paused for a quick greeting of the Judge and then passed on out of sight; — "she's charming — Do you suppose she knew what she was about when she put those red leaves and roses together? I didn't know there was that kind of thing in Pattaquasset."

"Yes, they look very well," said Mr. Linden coolly.

"Julius!" said Mrs. Somers, laying hold of the elbow of the suggestive coat, "what do you mean by keeping Mr. Linden and yourself back here. That's the way with you young men — stand off and gaze at a safe distance, and then make believe you're fire proof."

"Don't make believe anything, aunt Ellen," said the young man lightly. "Prove me. You can take me up to the cannon's mouth — or any other! — and see if I am afraid of it."

"I shall prove you before I take you anywhere," said Mrs. Somers. "You needn't talk to me in that style. But it's a little hard upon the boys to keep Mr. Linden here out of sight, — half of them don't know whether they're on their head or their heels till they see him, I can tell from their faces."

"Mr. Linden," said the doctor with a gesture of invitation to his companion, — "shall we go? Does it depend upon *your* face which of the positions mentioned is to be assumed?"

The two gentlemen accordingly threaded their way to the

scene of action; passing, among others, Squire Deacon and Mr. Simlins whom Mr. Linden greeted together. Mr. Simlins' answer was a mighty grasp of the hand. Squire Deacon's deserved little attention, and got it.

The party were now on the lawn, at one side of which the boys had clustered and were standing in expectation.

"I think, Mr. Linden," said the doctor, "if you will explain to the boys what is to become of them in the next hour, I will go and see about the fair distributor of the favours — and then I suppose we shall be ready."

It was well Dr. Harrison chose such a messenger, — no one else could have brought quietness out of those few dismayed minutes when the boys first learned what was 'to become of them'; and the Judge would have felt remorseful about his secret, had he seen the swift wings on which Pleasure took her departure from the little group. It took all Mr. Linden's skill, not to enforce submission, but to bring pleasure back; perhaps nothing less than his half laughing half serious face and words, could have kept some of the boys from running away altogether. And while some tried to beg off, and some made manful efforts not to feel afraid, others made desperate efforts to remember; and some of the little ones could be reassured by nothing but the actual holding of Mr. Linden's hand in theirs. So they stood, grouped in and out the trees at the further edge of the lawn, till their teacher disengaged himself and came back to the house, leaving the parting directions — to say what they knew, and not try to say what they knew not.

Meanwhile Dr. Harrison had found his sister, and after a little consulting the two had pressed their father into the service; and then the three sought Faith. She was discovered at last on the other lawn, by one of the tables, Miss Harrison having dismayfully recollected that she had asked Faith to help her dress them, and then had left her all alone to do it. But Faith was not all alone; for Mr. Simlins stood there like a good-natured ogre, watching her handling and disposing of the green leaves and late flowers with which she was sur-

rounded, and now and then giving a most extraordinary suggestion as to the same.

"Faith," said Miss Harrison after she had introduced her brother, — "I want you to give these favours to the boys. Somebody must do it, and I can't — and you must!"

"You see, my dear," said Judge Harrison, "Sophy and Julius want their fête to go off as prettily as possible; and so they want you to do this for them because you're the prettiest girl here."

"Then I can't do it, sir," said Faith. She blushed very prettily, to be sure, but she spoke very quietly.

"Faith! you will do it for me?" said Miss Harrison.

"I can't, Sophy."

"Nobody would do it so well as you — half!"

"But I can't do it at all." And Faith went on leafing her dishes.

"I dare put in no petition of my own," said the doctor then; "but I will venture to ask on the part of Mr. Linden, that you will do him and the school such a service."

Faith's dark eyes opened slightly. "Did he ask you, sir?"

"I cannot answer that," said the doctor, a little taken aback. "I have presumed on what I am sure are his wishes."

He did not know what to make of her smile, nor of the simplicity with which Faith answered, in spite of her varying colour,

"You have been mistaken, sir."

The doctor gave it up and said he was very sorry.

"Then who *shall* do it?" said Miss Harrison. "Miss Essie de Staff?"

"She'll do," said the Judge. And the doctor, raising his eyebrows a little, and dropping his concern, offered his arm to Faith to go to the scene of action. So it happened that as Mr. Linden entered the hall from one side door, he met the whole party coming in from the other, the doctor carrying the basket of blue and red favours which he had taken to present to Faith. But he stood still to let them pass, taking

the full effect of the favours, the doctor, the red leaves and their white-robed wearer; and then followed in his turn.

All the inhabitants of the house and grounds were now fast gathering on the other lawn. Miss Sophy and her father separated different ways, the former taking the basket to commit it to Miss de Staff; and the doctor being obliged to go to his place in the performance, left his charge where he might. But nobody minded his neighbour now; Faith did not; the boys were drawn up in a large semicircle, and the doctor taking his place in front of them, all in full view of the assembled townsmen of Pattaquasset, proceeded to his duty of examiner.

He did it well. He was evidently, to those who could see it, thorougly at home himself in all the subjects upon which he touched and made the boys touch; so thoroughly, that he knew skilfully *where* to touch, and what to expect of them. He shewed himself a generous examiner too; he keenly enough caught the weak and strong points in the various minds he was dealing with, and gracefully enough brought the good to light, and only shewed the other so much as was needful for his purposes. He did not catch, nor entrap, nor press hardly; the boys had fair play but they had favour too.

The boys, on their part, were not slow to discover his good qualities; and it was certainly a comfort to them to know that they were acquitted or condemned on right grounds. Beyond that, there were curious traits of character brought to light, for those who had eyes to read them.

The two head boys — Reuben Taylor and Sam Stoutenburgh, though but little apart in their scholarship were widely different in the manifestation thereof. Sam Stoutenburgh's rather off-hand, dashing replies, generally hit the mark; but the steady, quiet clearheadedness of Reuben not only placed him in advance, but gave indications which no one could read who had not the key to his character. He coloured sometimes, but it was from modesty; while part of Sam Stoutenburgh's blushes came from his curls. Little Johnny Fax, by dint of fixing his eyes upon Mr. Linden's

far-off form (he had been petitioned to stand in sight) went bravely through his short part of the performance; and proved that he knew what he knew, if he didn't know much; and of the rest there need nothing be said.

Among the lookers-on there were also indications. To those who did not know him, Mr. Linden's face looked as unmoved as the pillar against which he leaned, — yet the varying play of light and shade upon the one was well repeated in the other. Squire Stoutenburgh nodded and smiled, to himself and his neighbours, and made little aside observations — "*That* told, sir!" — "Always was a good boy! — studious." — "Yes — Reuben Taylor does well — very well, — considering who his father is."

That father the while, stood alone — even beyond the outskirts of the gay party. With Miss Cilly's blue dress he had nothing in common — as little with Faith's spotless white. Dark, weatherbeaten, dressed for his boat and the clam banks, he stood there on the green turf as if in a trance. Unable to follow one question or answer, his eager eye caught every word of Reuben's voice; his intent gaze read first the assurance that it would be right, then the assurance that it was. The whole world might have swept by him in a pageant — and he would scarcely have turned to look!

There was one other listener perhaps, whose interest was as rapt as his; that was Faith. But her interest was of more manifold character. There was the natural feeling for and with the boys; and there was sympathy for their instructor and concern for his honour, which latter grew presently to be a very gratified concern. Then also Dr. Harrison's examination was a matter of curious novelty; and back of all that, lay in Faith's mind a deep, searching, pressing interest in the subject matters of it. What of all that, *she* knew, — how little, — and how much the boys; — how vastly much Dr. Harrison; what far-reaching fields of knowledge there were in some people's minds. Where was Faith's mind going? Yet she was almost as outwardly quiet as Mr. Linden himself.

All her shew of feeling was in the intent eye, the grave face, and a little deepening and deepening tinge in her cheeks.

The questioning and answering was over — the boys were all in their ranks — there was a little hush and stir of expectancy, — and Dr. Harrison gave his hand to a very bright lady with a basket and led her to a position by his side, filling the eye of the whole assembly. Faith looked over to her with a tiny giving way of the lips which meant a great self-gratulation that she was not in the lady's place. There she stood, very much at home apparently, — Miss Essie de Staff, as fifty mouths said at once. She was rather a little lady, not very young, nor old; dressed in a gay-coloured plaid silk, with a jaunty little black apron with pockets, black hair in curls behind her ears, and a glitter of jewelry. It was not false jewelry, nor ill put on, and this was Miss Essie de Staff. She belonged to the second great family of Pattaquasset; she too had been abroad and had seen life like the Harrisons; but somehow she had seen it in a different way; and while the de Staffs had the shew, the Harrisons always had the reality of precedence in the town.

And Dr. Harrison, raising slightly again his voice, which was a melodious one, said,

"The ladies of Pattaquasset intend to honour with a blue ribband the five elder boys who have spoken best; and with a favour of red ribband the five little boys who have done the same on their part. Miss Essie de Staff will do us the honour to bestow them. — Reuben Taylor, will you come forward — here, if you please."

The 'favours' made a little stir among the group; and Reuben, who had been too much absorbed in the examination for its own sake to think much of the question of precedence, came forward at first with hesitation — then steadily and firmly.

Miss Essie stepped a little forward to meet him, gave her basket to Doctor Harrison, and taking a blue favour from it she smilingly attached the same securely to the left breast of Reuben's coat.

"Don't leave your place," said the doctor to him in a low tone; — "I mean," he added smiling, — "go back to it and stay there. — Sam Stoutenburgh!" —

The doctor spoke like a man a little amused at himself for the part he was playing, but he did it well, nevertheless. And Reuben, who would fain have put himself and his blue ribband out of sight behind the rest, went back to his place, while Sam stepped briskly forward and received the decoration in turn. Very different his air from Reuben's, — very different Reuben's grave and grateful bend of the head from the way in which Sam's hand covered at once his heart and the blue ribband. The four boys next in degree to Reuben were severally invested with their blue stars.

"Johnny Fax!" — said Dr. Harrison. "Miss Essie, you are laying us under nameless obligations. — Johnny, come and get ribband."

Johnny came — looking first at Dr. Harrison and then at Miss Essie, as if a little uncertain what they were going to do with him; but apparently the fluttering red favour pleased his fancy, for he smiled a little, and then looked quite away over Miss Essie's shoulder as she bent towards him. For which neglect of the lady's face his youth and inexperience must account. But when the favour was on, Johnny's eyes came back, and he said simply,

"Thank you, ma'am. Shall I keep it always?"

"By all means!" said Miss Essie. "Never part with it."

The five little fellows were made splendid; and then there was a pause. Miss Essie stepped back and was lost. Doctor Harrison made a sign with his hand, and two servants came on the lawn bringing between them a table covered with a red cloth. It was set down before Dr. Harrison and his sister came beside him.

"My dear friends," said the doctor raising his voice again, and giving his sister at the same time the benefit of a slight play of face which others were not so situated they could see, — "You have all done yourselves and somebody else, a great deal of credit. I hope you will thank him; — as we wish to

shew our pleasure to you. It was not to be expected that everybody would be first this time — though on the next occasion I have no doubt that will prove to be the case; but as we could not of course in consequence give stars to all, we will do the best we can. Reuben Taylor —"

Again Reuben came forward; the doctor had pulled off the red cloth, and a tempting pile of books, large and small and nicely bound, rose up to view upon the table. And Miss Harrison as Reuben came near, chose out one of the best and handed it to him, saying softly, "You have done very well."

Now Miss Sophy Harrison was, as everyone knew and said, thoroughly good and kind, like her father. She had chosen the books. And the one she had given Reuben was a very nice copy of the Pilgrim's Progress. She might have felt herself repaid by the one earnest look his eyes gave her, — then he bowed silently and retired.

The list would be too long to go through. Every one was pleased this time; the Harrisons had done the thing well; and it may only be noted in passing that Johnny Fax's delight and red ribband were crowned and finished off with an excellent Robinson Crusoe. Then broke up and melted off the assembled throng, like — I want a simile, — like the scattering of a vapoury cloud in the sky. It was everywhere and nowhere directly — that which before had been a distinct mass.

"Faith," said Miss Cecilia, almost before this process of dispersion commenced, — "where *did* you get such a pretty nosegay this time of year?"

"They grew —" said Faith smiling.

"Did they come out of your own garden."

"We don't keep oak trees in our garden?"

"I declare! it's elegant. Faith, give me just one of those red leaves, won't you? I want it."

"No indeed!" said Faith, starting back and shielding the oak leaves with her hand, as that of Miss Deacon approached them. "What are you thinking of?"

"Thinking of!" said Cecilia colouring. "So, Faith, I hear you've set up for a school teacher?"

"I've one little scholar," said Faith quietly. "That isn't much 'setting up,' Cecilia."

"One scholar!" said Cecilia contemptuously. "Didn't you go over with all the boys to Neanticut the other day?"

"Yes," said Faith laughing, "indeed I did; but I assure you I didn't go to teach school."

"Miss Derrick," said Dr. Harrison, offering his arm to Faith, — "my sister begs the favour of your assistance — instantly and urgently — you know I presume for what?"

"Yes, I know, Dr. Harrison," said Faith smiling — "I left it unfinished" —

And the two walked away together.

" 'Seems to me, Mr. Simlins," said Squire Deacon, watching Faith and her convoy with a certain saturnine satisfaction; "I say it seems to me, that the Judge aint making the thing right side upwards. The boys get all the prizes — without Dr. Harrison thinks *he* has, and the teacher don't seem to be much count. Now what a handsomer thing it would have been to make the boys get *him* something with their own hard cash, — a pleasure boat —" added the Squire, "or a Bible — or anything of that sort. I thought all this philustration was to set *him* up."

Mr. Simlins gave a kind of grunt.

"It haint pulled him *down* much," he said, — "as I see. And I suppose Judge Harrison thinks that drivin' wedges under a church steeple is a surrogate work — without he saw it was topplin'."

Without getting any too clear a notion of the meaning of these words — it took a lively imagination to follow Mr. Simlins in some of his flights, the Squire yet perceived enough to stay his own words a little; and he passed away the tedium of the next few minutes by peering round the corner of the house and getting far-off glimpses of Faith.

"She looks 'most like a spectral illusion," he said admiringly. "The tablecloths aint bleached a bit whiter 'n her dress."

"She aint no more like a spectre than I'm like a ghost,"

said Mr. Simlins. "Washin' and ironin' 'll make a white frock for any woman."

Then stalking up to Mr. Linden accosted him grimly, after his fashion. "Well Mr. Linden — what d' you think of that farm at Neanticut? don't you want to take it of me?"

"There are too many fences between me and it," was the smiling reply.

"It's good land," Mr. Simlins went on; "you can't do better than settle down there. I'd like to have you for a tenant — give you the land easy."

"Let me pay you in nuts?" said Mr. Linden.

But then came up other farmers and heads of families to claim Mr. Linden's attention; men whose boys were at the school; and who now in various states of gratification, but all gratified, came one after another to grasp his hand and thank him for the good he had done and was doing them.

"You're the first man, sir," said one, a broad-shouldered, tall, strong man, with a stern reserved face, — "you're the first man that has been able to make that boy of mine — Phil — attend to anything, or go to school regular. He talks hard sometimes, — but you do what you like with him, Mr. Linden! I give you my leave. He's smart, and he aint a bad boy, at heart; but he's wild, and he has his own way and it aint always a good one. His mother never had any government of him," said the father, looking towards the identical person whom Dr. Harrison had characterized as 'the perspective of a woman,' and who certainly had the air of one whose mind — what she had — was shut up and shut off into the further extremities of possibility.

Then came up Judge Harrison.

"Well, Mr. Linden, I hope you have been gratified. *I* have. I declare I have! — very much. You are doing a great thing for us here, sir; and I don't doubt it is a gratification to you to know it. I haven't made up my mind what we shall do to thank *you* — we've been thanking the boys — but that's, you know, — that's a political expedient. My heart's in the other thing."

"Squire Deacon was givin' me about the same perspective of the case," said Mr. Simlins, — "only he thought he warnt the one to do the thankin'."

Mr. Linden's face, through all these various gratulations, had been a study. One part of his nature answered, eye to eye and hand to hand, the thanks and pleasure so variously expressed. But back of that lay something else, — a something which gave even his smile a tinge, — it was the face of one who

"Patiently, and still expectant,
Looked out through the wooden bars."

Sometimes grave, at others a queer sense of his own position seemed to touch him; and his manner might then remind one of a swift-winged bird — who walking about on the grass for business purposes, is complimented by a company of crickets on his superior powers of locomotion. And it was with almost a start that he answered Judge Harrison —

"Thank *me*, sir? I don't think I deserve any thanks."

"I am sure we owe them," said the Judge, — "but that's another view of the case, I know. Well — it's a good kind of debt to owe — and to pay! —"

And he was lost again among some other of his guests. In the gradual shifting and melting away of groups, it happened that Mr. Linden found himself for a moment alone, when the doctor again approached him.

"Did I do your office well?" he said gently, and half putting his arm through Mr. Linden's as if to lead him to the house.

The answer was laughingly given —

"'What poet would not mourn to see
His brother write as well as he?'"

"Well," said the doctor, answering the tone, "did I hit your boys? — the right ones?"

"My boys in point of scholarship? — yes, almost as carefully as I should."

"I am glad you were satisfied," said the doctor; — "and I'm glad it's over! — What sort of a life do you lead here

in Pattaquasset? I don't know it. How can one get along here?"

He spoke in a careless sort of confidential manner, as perfectly aware that his companion was able to answer him. They were very slowly sauntering up to the house.

"One can get along here in various ways —" said Mr. Linden, — "as in other places. One can (*if* one can) subside to the general level, or one can (with the like qnalification) rise above it. The paths through Pattaquasset are in no wise peculiar, yet by no means alike."

"No," said the doctor, with another side look at him — "I suppose as much. I see you're a philosopher. Do you carry a spirit-level about with you?"

"Define —" said Mr. Linden, with a smile which certainly belonged to the last philosopher he had been in company with.

"I see you do," said the doctor. "What's your opinion of philosophy? that it adds to the happiness of the world in general?"

"You ask broad questions, Dr. Harrison — considering the many kinds of philosophy, and the unphilosophical state of 'the world in general.'"

The doctor laughed a little. "I don't know," said he, — "I sometimes think the terms have changed sides, and that 'the world in general' has really the best of it. But do you know what particular path in Pattaquasset we are treading at this minute?"

"A path where philosophy and happiness are supposed to part company, I imagine," said Mr. Linden.

"Pre-cisely —" said the doctor. "By the way, if anything in my father's house or library can be of the least convenience to you while you are travelling the somewhat unfurnished ways of Pattaquasset, I hope you will use both as your own. — Yes, I am taking you to the supper table — or indeed they are plural to-night — Sophy, I have brought Mr. Linden to you, and I leave you to do what you will with him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

With a slight congee the doctor left them and went back again; and then came the full rush of all the guests, small and great. Miss Harrison claimed Mr. Linden's assistance to marshal and arrange the boys at their table – one being given specially to them; and then established him as well as circumstances permitted at another — between Miss Cecilia Deacon and Miss Essie de Staff. Miss Harrison herself did not sit down. The guests were many, the servants far too few; and Miss Harrison and her brother with one or two helpers, of whom Faith was one, went round from table to table; attending to everybody's wants. The supply of all eatables and drinkables was ample and perfect enough; but without the quick and skilful eyes and hands of these educated waiters, the company could not have been entirely put in possession of them. So Faith's red oak leaves did after all adorn the entertainment, and publicly, though most unconsciously on her part.

"Reuben," she whispered at his shoulder, "there are no roast clams here — shall I give you some jelly? I see you have got substantials."

"No thank you, Miss Faith," said Reuben — adding with some hesitation, "I believe it's ungrateful in me, but I don't want to eat."

"Are you eating your book all the while? I am so glad, Reuben! Where is your father?"

"I think he's home, Miss Faith — he must be by this time."

"Home! I'm sorry. I've been looking for him. Sam — what can I get you? coffee?"

"Miss Faith!" said Sam standing up in his place, "I'd rather have one of those leaves you've been wearing all day than all the coffee that ever was burnt!"

"Leaves! you foolish boy," said Faith, her own colour in an instant emulating them, and as before her hand went

up to shield them. "I can't give you one of these, Sam — I'll bring you some coffee."

Away she ran, coming back presently with a cup and a piece of jelly cake, bestowing a fellow piece upon Reuben.

"You can get plenty of oak leaves anywhere, Sam," she said laughing a little.

"But you haven't worn 'em, Miss Faith — and I can't keep this!" said Sam surveying the cake with a very serio-comic face.

"Well, who wants to?" said Joe Deacon. "Hand us over the other cake, that's got nothing between. If you're settin' up to get round anybody, Sam Stoutenburgh, you'll find there's two or three in a bunch — I tell *you*." Which remark Faith was happily too far off to hear.

"Faith," said Mrs. Somers, leaning back and stopping her as she passed;" do you know why I let Sophy keep you running about so?"

"I like to do it, Mrs. Somers."

"Well that's not the reason. You ought to sit up at the head of the table for your skill in arranging flowers. I didn't know it was in you, child."

And Mrs. Somers bent closer to Faith to take the breath of the roses, but softly for she loved flowers herself.

Faith bore it jealously, for she was afraid of another invading hand; and blushing at the praise she could not disclaim ran away as soon as she was free. But as the tide of supper-time began to ebb, the doctor arrested Faith in her running about and saying that his sister had had no supper yet and wanted company, led her to the place his aunt had spoken of, a clear space at one end of the table, where the doctor also discovered *he* had taken no supper. The rest of the party sat at ease, or began to scatter again about the grounds. A new attraction was appearing there, in the shape of Chinese lanterns, which the servants and others were attaching in great numbers to the trees and shrubbery. The sun went down, the shades of evening were fast gathering. At last Miss Harrison rose.

"When the lamps are lit, Miss Derrick," said the doctor as they followed her example, "there is a particular effect which I will have the pleasure of shewing you — if you will allow me."

"Dr. Harrison, how do *you* do!" said a voice that sounded like — perhaps as much like the bark of a red squirrel as anything; and a little figure, with everything faded but her ribbands, and everything full but her cheeks, looked up with a pair of good, kind, honest eyes into the doctor's face. "It makes a body feel young — or old — I don't know which, to see you again," she said. "Though indeed I know just how old you are, without looking into the Bible. Not but that's a good place to look, for various things. And there's a great variety of things there, — if a body had time to read 'em all, which I haven't. I used to read like a scribe when I was young — till my eyes got bad; but a body can't do much without eyes, especially when they have to sew all the time, as I do. I always did think it was one indemnification for being a man, that a body wouldn't have to sew. Nor do much of anything else — for 'man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done.' And I always think the work after sundown comes hardest — it does to me, because my eyes are so bad. — Well, Miss Cilly! don't your dress fit!" — It may be proper to mention that this last sentence was a little undertone.

"You have given me, Miss Bezac," said the doctor, "what I have wanted all my life until now — an indemnification for being a man!"

"Is that the way they talk over in France?" said Miss Bezac — "well, it don't make a body want to go there, there's that about it. And there always is something about everything. And I've something to say to you, Faith, so don't you run away. You've done running enough for one day, besides."

Faith was in no danger of running away. For while Miss Bezac was running off her sentences, a little low voice

at Faith's side said "Ma'am!" — by way of modestly drawing her attention to Johnny Fax and his red ribband.

Faith stooped down to be nearer the level of the red ribband.

"You did bravely, Johnny. And you got a book too. I guess Mr. Linden was pleased with you to-night," she added softly.

"O he's always pleased with me," said Johnny simply. "But I wasn't brave, ma'am, — I was frightened." Then in a lower tone, as if he were telling a great secret, Johnny added,

"I'm coming to you next Sunday if it's cold weather" — and looked up in her face to see the effect of this mysterious announcement.

"You, Johnny!" said Faith, with a flash of remembrance of the time she had last seen him, which made her almost sorrowful. "Well, dear — we'll do the best we can," she added in a tone which was sweet at least as tenderness could make it. The child looked at her a little wistfully.

"Mr. Linden says he don't think I'm big enough to keep warm out of doors any more," he said with childish inexplicitness.

"I don't think you are," said Faith. "Well, Johnny — you come to me next Sunday, and we'll try!" — And she gave him, what Sam Stoutenburgh would probably have mortgaged his life for, — a soft touch of her lips upon his cheek. And Sam Stoutenburgh was not far off.

"Miss Faith!" he said as she rose to her former position, — "stand out of the way, Johnny, there's a good boy! — mayn't I see you home to-night? Please don't refuse me everything!"

"There isn't room in the wagon, Sam," said Faith.

"O are you going to ride?" said Sam. "But I may go with you to the wagon?"

"Yes if you like," said Faith looking a little puzzled and amused. "I suppose you may."

"Are there any more to come?" said Miss Bezac, whose

patience had outlasted that of Dr. Harrison, — "because if there are, I'd rather wait — I don't like to be stopped when once I begin. And if I was you, Faith — (how pretty you look!) — I'd keep still and not let my head be turned; the old direction's the best; and after all directions are more than dresses. For what's the odds between an embroidered vest and a plain one? Not that it's much to embroider it — I used to fiddle faddle many a one, till I lost my eyes; and I'll teach you to do it in a minute, if you like." With which kind and lucid proposal, Miss Bezac put her hand softly on Faith's waist and smoothed out an imaginary wrinkle in the white dress.

"Dear Miss Bezac," said Faith, not losing her amused look, — "I don't want to embroider waistcoats. What are you talking of?"

"I know —" said Miss Bezac, "and I suppose that's enough. If folks don't know what you mean they can't say anything against it. But you don't know what you want, child, — any more than I did. And do you know, sometimes I wish I'd never found out? But whenever you *do* know, you can come to me; and I'll fix you off so you won't know yourself. It's a pleasant way to lose a body's identity, I can tell you. Now give me a kiss and I'll go for I live 'tother side of creation — where you never come; and why you don't come, and bring him, I don't see — but I've seen him, in spite of you. Here he comes, too" — said Miss Bezac, "so I'll be off."

There was such a variety of confusions in this speech that Faith was hopeless of setting them right. She stood looking at the speaker, and did not try. However, everybody was accustomed to Miss Bezac's confusions.

"Are you pledged to stand still on this particular spot?" Mr. Linden said at her side.

"No indeed," said Faith with ready smile, — "but people have been talking to me —"

"Yes, and there is no telling how many I shall interfere with if I take you away now."

"I don't care —" said Faith. "Only Dr. Harrison said he wanted to shew me something when the lamps were lit."

"When they are lighting? or when they are lit?"

"When they are lit, he said."

"Well they are not lit yet," said Mr. Linden, "and before they are I want you to get a view of people and things in twilight perspective. For which purpose, Miss Faith, I must take you to the extreme verge of society and the lawn — if you will let me."

"I would like to go anywhere you please, Mr. Linden." And Faith's face gave modest token that she would like it very much.

He gave her his arm, and then by skilful navigation kept clear of the groups most likely to interrupt their progress; passing rather towards the boy quarter, making Sam Stoutenburgh sigh and Joe Deacon whistle, with the most frigid disregard of their feelings. The shrubbery at the foot of the lawn was in more than twilight now, and its deeper shadow was good to look out from; giving full effect to the dying light on earth and sky. The faint rosecoloured clouds hung over a kaleidoscope of dresses, which was ever shifting and making new combinations, passing into black spots in the shadow of the trees, or forming a broad spread of patchwork on the open lawn. The twilight perspective was far more witching than the sunlight full view.

"How pretty that is!" said Faith delightedly. "Thank you, Mr. Linden. I don't believe Dr. Harrison will shew me any effect so good as this. How pretty and odd it is!"

"Don't you know," he said, "that you never should thank me for doing pleasant things?"

"Why, Mr. Linden?" she said in a tone a little checked.

"Why? — because I like to do them."

"Well," she said laughing slightly, "that makes me want to thank you more."

"It don't make me deserve the thanks, however. Do you perceive the distant blue of Miss Cecilia's dress? does it make you think of the blue ether over your head?"

"Not the least!" said Faith much amused. "What makes you ask me that, Mr. Linden?"

"I should like to hear why it does not?"

"The two things are so very, very far apart," Faith said, after a moment's consideration. "I don't see what could make me think of them together. The only thing is that both are blue, but I should have to think to remember that."

"You haven't answered me yet," he said smiling. "Why are they far apart? — your blue gentians there, are as far below the sky in number of miles — yet from them to the sky the transition is easy."

"Yes —" said Faith looking down at her blue gentian. "Why is it, Mr. Linden? But this is God's work too," she added softly.

"I suppose that is the deep root of the matter. The ruined harp of man's nature yet answers to a breath from heaven as to no other touch. Then blue has been so long the emblem of truth, that separated from truth one can scarce, as you say, realize what colour it is."

"Then Mr. Linden," said Faith after a moment's silence, with the tone and the look of quick pleasure, — "is *this* what you mean by 'reading' things?"

"Yes — " he said with a smile,

> " 'To rightly spell
> Of every star that heaven doth shew,
> And every herb that sips the dew.' "

"But how far can you read?" said Faith. "And I never thought of such reading till — till a little while ago! How far can you read, Mr. Linden?"

"I don't know —" he said, — "because I don't know how far I *cannot* read! Yet if 'the invisible things of God' may be known 'by the things which are seen,' there is at least room for ample study. To some people, Miss Faith, the world is always (with the change of one adjective) an incomprehensible little green book; while others read a few pages now, and look forward to knowing the whole hereafter."

There was a pause, a little longer than usual.

"And you say I must not thank you?" — Faith said very low.

"I say I think you have no cause."

She was silent.

"Has the day been pleasant?" Mr. Linden asked, as they walked up and down.

"Yes, very pleasant. I liked what you didn't like, Mr. Linden — all that examination business. And I was very glad for Reuben and little Johnny."

"How do you know I didn't like it?"

"I don t 'know' — I thought you didn't," she said looking at him.

"You don't like to say why?"

"Yes! I thought you didn't like it, Mr. Linden, when Judge Harrison first proposed it. You wished he would give us the pleasure without the shewing off."

"Well, did you also know," he said with a peculiar little smile, "that one of my best scholars was not examined?"

"No — who do you mean?" she said earnestly.

He laughed, and answered,

"One who would perhaps prefer a private examination at home — and to whom I have thought of proposing it."

"An examination?" said Faith, wondering and with considerable heightening of colour, either at the proposal or at the rank among scholars assigned her.

"You need not be frightened," Mr. Linden said gravely — "if anybody should be, it is I, at my own boldness. I am a little afraid to go on now — though it is something I have long wanted to say to you."

"What is it, Mr. Linden?" she said timidly.

"I have thought —" he paused a moment, and then went quietly on. "You have given me reason to think, that there are other desirable things besides French of which you have no knowledge. I have wished very much to ask you what they are, and that you would let me — so far as I can — supply the deficiency." It was said with simple frankness, yet with a manner that fully recognized the delicate ground he was on.

The rush of blood to Faith's face he could see by the lamplight, but she hesitated for an answer, and hesitated, — and her head was bent with the weight of some feeling.

"I should be too glad, Mr. Linden!" she said at last, very low, but with unmistakeable emphasis.

"Then if you will let me see to-morrow what you are doing with that other little book, I will see what companions it should have." And warned by the kindling lamps on every side, he led the way a little more into the open lawn, that Faith might at least be found if sought. That allowed him to see too, the look he had raised in her face; the little smile on the lips, the flush of colour, the stir of deep pleasure that kept her from speaking. Yet when they had taken a few steps on the broad lawn and other people would soon be nearing them, she suddenly said, softly,

"What 'other' book do you mean, Mr. Linden?"

"I don't know how many there may be, Miss Faith, but I *meant* one which I tried to get at the store one day, and found that the last copy had passed into your hands."

"The arithmetic!" said Faith. "That was how you knew it. — There is Dr. Harrison looking for me!" she added, in a tone which gentle as it was would have turned that gentleman to the right about if he had heard it — which he did not — and if he had not been indifferent on the point of all such tones, — which he was.

"Stars shine by their own light!" said the doctor as he came up. "I have no need to ask, 'Where is Miss Derrick?' Your Quercus rubra there is brilliant at any distance, with a red gleam. You have Mars on your breast, and Hesperus in your eye! It is heaven on earth!"

Faith could not choose but laugh at the mixture of gallantry and fun and flattery in the doctor's manner, though his meaning was, to her, doubtful. Other answer she made none.

"And so," said Mr. Linden, "you make the stars shine by their own light, and Miss Derrick by the light of the stars!"

"Advances constantly making in the sciences!" said the doctor with a wave of his hand. "I dare say you are a better astronomer than I am; — I haven't kept up with the latest discoveries. But Mr. Linden, may I interfere with your heaven for a moment, and persuade these stars to shine, for that length of time, upon less favoured regions? With another revolution of the earth they will rise upon you again."

"I shall not persuade the stars for you," said Mr. Linden.

"I will endeavour so far," said the doctor turning to Faith. "I had the honour to offer to shew Miss Derrick the peculiar effect of Chinese lanterns in Pattaquasset — may I hope that she will allow me to fulfil my promise?"

He took possession of Faith, and with a graceful "Au revoir!" — to Mr. Linden, led her away.

The effect of the lanterns was very pretty, and to her eyes very curious. So were the lanterns themselves, before one and another of which Faith stopped and looked with charmed eyes, and the doctor nothing loth gave her charming details.

"After all, it is only child's play," he said as he turned away. "Why should we want Pattaquasset to look like China?"

"For one night?" said Faith.

"Well, for one night," said the doctor. "But you haven't got little feet on, have you?" said he looking down at the edge of Faith's white dress in mock alarm; — "I shouldn't like the transformation to go too far."

Faith laughed.

"Reassure me," said the doctor. "Nothing can be more unlike the Mongol type than the pure Circassian I have before me, — yet let me see the slipper. I want to be sure that *all* is right."

He persisted, and to stop the absurdity of the thing, Faith shewed him, not indeed her slipper, but the most un-Chinese, un-French, neat little shoe thick enough for walking, in which she had come to Judge Harrison's party.

"Alarmingly near!" said the doctor peering at it — "but the proportions are perfect. It is not Chinese. Thank you. I have seen so many odd things in my life, Miss Derrick, — and people, — that I never know what to expect; and *anything* right from head to foot, is a marvel."

They moved on again and sauntered round and round in the paths of the shrubbery, Faith hardly knew whither. In truth the doctor's conversation was amusing enough to leave her little care. Very few indeed were the words he drew from her; but with all their simplicity and modesty, he seemed to be convinced that there was something behind them worth pleasing; at least he laid himself out to please. He easily found that what she knew of life and the world was very little, and that she was very ready to take any glimpses he would give her into the vast unknown regions so well known to him. Always in his manner carelessly graceful, Faith never dreamed of the real care with which he brought up subjects, and discussed them, that he thought would interest her. He told of distant countries and scenes — he detailed at length foreign experiences — he described people — he gave her pictures of manners and customs, — all new to her ears, strange and delightful; and so easily yet so masterly given, that she took it all in an easy full flow of pleasure. So it happened that Faith did not very well know how they turned and wound in and out through the walks; she was in Switzerland and at Paris and at Rome, all the while.

She came back pretty suddenly to Pattaquasset. As they paused to watch the glitter of one of the lamps on the shining leaves of a holly tree, several of the boys, seeking their own pleasure, came sauntering by. The last of these had time to observe her, and swaggering close up under her face said, loud enough to be heard,

"You aint, neither! — I know you aint. Reuben Taylor says you aint."

The lamplight did not serve to reveal Faith's changes of face and colour, neither did Dr. Harrison wait to observe them.

"What do you mean, sir?" he said, catching hold of the boy's arm. "Why do you speak so to a lady? — *what* isn't she?"

"Somebody's sweetheart," said the boy resolutely. "She aint. Reuben Taylor says she aint."

"*You*'ll never be, my fine fellow," said the doctor letting him go, — "if you don't learn more discretion. I must tell Mr. Linden his boys want a trifle of something besides Algebra. *That* don't give all the relative values of things."

"Pray do not! don't speak of it, Dr. Harrison!" said Faith.

He tried to see her face, but he could not.

"Hardly worth while," he said lightly. "Boys will be boys — which is an odd way of excusing them for not being civilized things. However — if you excuse him, I will."

Faith said nothing. She was trying to get over the sudden jar of those words. They had not told her anything she did not believe — she thought no other; but they gave her nevertheless a keen stir of pain — a revival of the pain she had quieted at Neanticut; and somehow this was worse than that. Could Reuben Taylor talk about her so? — could Reuben Taylor have any *authority* for doing it? But that question would not stand answering. Faith's red oak leaves were a little Ægis to her then, a tangible precious representative of all the answer that question would not wait for. No sting of pain could enter that way. But the pain was bad enough; and under the favouring shadowy light of the lamps she strove and strove to quiet it; while the doctor went on talking.

"Indeed," — said he — going on with the subject of Phil's speech, — "I am obliged to him for his information — which was of course incorrect. But I am very glad to hear it nevertheless. Other people's sweethearts, you know, are 'tabooed' — sacred ground — not to be approached without danger to all concerned. But now — if you will allow me, I think I shall claim you for mine."

Whatever *look* the words may have, they did not sound

rude. They were said with a careless half-amused, half gentle manner, which might leave his hearer in doubt whether the chief purpose of them were not to fall pleasantly on her ear and drive away any disagreeable remainders of Phil's insolence. But Faith scarce heard him. She was struggling with that unbidden pain, and trying with all the simplicity and truth of her nature and with the stronger help she had learned to seek, to fight it down. She had never thought such an utterly vain thought as that suggested in Phil's words; in her humility and modesty she chid herself that it should have come into her head even when other people's words had forced it there. Her humility was very humble now. And in it she quietly took up with the good she had, of which her roses were even then breathing sweet reminders in her face; putting from her all thought of good that did not belong to her and she could not deserve.

The uncertain light favoured her well, or Dr. Harrison would have seen too much of her face-play. They had been going on and on, and the doctor had been as usual talking, and she had managed now and then to seem to give an answer — she never remembered to what; and her part in the conversation all along had been so modestly small that the doctor hardly knew when or whether she had ceased to comprehend him. But they emerged at last upon the lawn, where Faith was taken possession of and marched off by the old Judge, nothing loth.

The doctor casting about for another fish to throw his line at, spied Reuben Taylor, standing alone, and eying as Mr. Linden and Faith had done the gay scene about the house, now gay with the many-coloured lamps.

"Well, my man," said the doctor easily accosting him as he stood there, "you did very well this afternoon. How long have you been at the school?"

Reuben made answer with his usual respectful courtesy.

"Are you a friend of Miss Derrick's?"

"I think Miss Derrick is my friend, sir," said Reuben with a little flush.

"Is she?" said the doctor. "Well don't you think that comes to the same thing?"

"No sir."

"No? What's the difference? I'm not examining you now — I am asking for information."

"I think you must know, sir," said Reuben, respectfully but firmly, after a glance at his questioner.

"Do you?" said the doctor laughing slightly. "Well, if you are not her friend, it don't signify. I was going to remark to you, if you *were*, that ladies don't generally care to have their private affairs talked about, and however much you may know, it is not always worth while to tell it."

"I neither know nor have said any thing, Dr. Harrison," said Reuben, drawing himself up a little, and looking full in the doctor's face.

"You're Reuben Taylor, aren't you?"

"Yes sir — I'm not anybody else though."

"No," said the doctor carelessly. "Well, it isn't necessary you should be, for present purposes. I heard you quoted as authority just now, on something which touched that lady's affairs, whose friend you say you are not — and I think, *your* friend though she may be, she was not particularly gratified with your interference."

"Miss Faith knew it was a wrong quotation," said Reuben quietly.

"You are sure of that?"

"Quite sure, sir — if it was anything about her which I ought not to have said."

"Don't know that it was," said the doctor; "it's well enough sometimes to set people right when they are wrong — what I say is, that ladies don't always thank one for it."

Reuben flushed a little.

"You don't know me, Dr. Harrison," he said — "I can't expect you to take my word; but I have nothing to add to it."

"And I have nothing to add to mine," said the doctor lightly. "I heard you quoted — that's all; I supposed you would know what for."

"Who did you hear, sir?"

"Don't know, really," said the doctor — "only he was a rude fellow — if you can tell one by such a description among your mates, it was he."

And the doctor strolled away.

Reuben on his part seemed to recognize the description, for taking a sort of intuitive bee-line through people and trees, he suddenly brought up with the question,

"Phil Davids, what have you been saying about me?"

"I s'pose you think folks have nothing to do but talk about you now. You're a long way out!" — was the careless answer.

"What did you say I said?" said Reuben.

"I never heard you say anything, as I know, that was worth tellin' over. When I do, I'll let somebody know it, I tell *you*."

"I suppose that means that you won't answer my question," said Reuben. "What I want to know is, not what I said, but what you say I said."

"About what?"

"About Miss Faith Derrick."

"I don't say you said nothing about her — I never heard you call her name, as I know."

"Like enough," said Reuben, with a sort of resolute patience; "but what did you say I said that had to do with her in any way?"

"Who do you think you air?" said Phil.

"I tell you what, Phil Davids," said Sam Stoutenburgh, who had heard the last question or two, "if you don't keep your tongue off Miss Derrick, I'll pitch you up into a pine tree so far that you'll see stars before you come down — or I'm not Stoutenburgh nor stout, neither!" and Sam — who was a little of a young giant — backed Phil up against the tree that was nearest in a sort of preparatory way that was rather breathless. Phil however was as tough as shoe leather.

"Suppos'n you keep eyes off her, then," said he struggling. "It's a poor rule that don't work both ways."

"What have you been about?" said Sam, — "come, own up for once — just to try how it feels."

"What have *you?*" said Phil. "I aint up to half as many shines as you, Sam Stoutenburgh."

"I should think not!" said Sam disdainfully.

"O let him alone, Sam!" said Reuben — "what's the use?"

"Little enough use —" said Sam, "or matter either, — everybody knows Phil Davids. Pity he wouldn't make his own acquaintance!" And releasing his prisoner Sam turned disdainfully and Reuben sorrowfully towards the house. But Reuben did not go very near. A wistful look or two towards the lighted front and the clustering guests, and he paused, leaving Sam to go on alone.

Sam's bashfulness was happily not of the uncompromising kind, therefore he not only found Faith, but she found him — ready to claim her promise — the very moment she was ready to go.

"But I don't know whether the wagon is here, Sam," said Faith. Other wagons were come, and driving off, and a little procession of colours was setting forth on foot, up and down the street from Judge Harrison's. The hall was full of people, getting hoods on and taking leave.

"Well, Miss Faith," said Sam, "we can walk to where it ought to be, and if it isn't there maybe you'll let me go further."

"But I can't go without seeing my mother, Sam, and I don't know where she is."

"Sam Stoutenburgh!" said Mr. Linden's voice, while the speaker laid both hands on the boy's shoulders, "what are you about?"

"Miss Faith said I might go as far as the wagon with her, sir," said Sam looking down.

"The wagon is not here," said Mr. Linden, — "Mr. Skip is probably asleep."

"Then I may see you home, Miss Faith?" was the joyous comment.

"Sam Stoutenburgh!" said Mr. Linden again, preventing Faith's reply, and giving Sam a gentle shake. "Isn't one favour a day enough for you?" he added presently.

"No sir!" said Sam boldly.

"I suppose I must give way before a blue ribband," said Mr. Linden smiling, yet as if he was much inclined to lift Sam out of the way. "Miss Faith, the matter is in your hands."

But Faith did not smile, and looked, or was it his fancy?— ever so little careworn.

"What matter, Mr. Linden?" she said simply.

"Wether you will take charge of this boy as far as his father's gate. I will try and take care of you, after that."

"Will that do, Sam?" said Faith pleasantly, as she threw her scarf over her head.

"I'm glad to go any distance with you, Miss Faith," said Sam, but half content — or a quarter! for that was the distance assigned him.

"Well behave yourself then," said Mr. Linden, removing his hands. A parting injunction Sam's dignity would have dispensed with.

CHAPTER XV.

The evening was very still. A little too cool for insect voices, a little too late in the season for night birds, the soft dropping of the yellow leaves scarce stirred those already fallen. Few sounds came from the houses; for all Pattaquasset had been out, and that portion which had got home was tired and thinking of bed, while the few stragglers yet abroad were far from the late scene of action, on their lonely homeward roads. Squire Deacon, with Joe for a thorn in his side, was opening his own door for Miss Cecilia, and Miss Bethia Bezac, at 'the other side of creation,' mused over the possibility of again (without eyes) embroidering waistcoats. Thus when the clock struck eight, the earth seemed asleep and the stars at watch over it.

At about that point of time, Sam Stoutenburgh and his fair companion were near the parting gate; and Sam, not supposing himself within range of other eyes, had bent down over Faith's glove in a very demonstrative manner; and she would certainly have received an unwonted proof of his devotion, if Mr. Linden — who had in truth been all the time not very far off — had not just then been very near.

"Take care, Sam —" he said, — "you are exceeding directions." A remark which sent Sam through the gate with more haste than coolness, while Mr. Linden stepped forward into his place.

"Your mother rode home with Mrs. Somers, Miss Faith, and this little shawl was requested to walk home with you," he said, wrapping it round her; for which he received a quiet little "Thank you." He put her hand on his arm, and once past the gate walked very slowly; moderating his steps to hers, and taking the most leisurely pace; perhaps to give her the full sedative effect of the night. Those faint breaths of air, that soft hush of everything, that clear starry sky, — so high, so still, — there was balm in them all.

And for a while Mr. Linden let them do their work alone, — then he spoke.

"One of my scholars is very tired to night. I'm afraid I have done wrong in letting her walk home."

"O no!" said Faith with a little start, — "I like to walk very much, Mr. Linden; it's very pleasant. — And I am not tired," she added in a soft quiet voice.

"What is the difference between being tired, and being in want of rest?"

She looked at him again, and her words did not come at once.

"I suppose the difference is, that in one case you can get what you want — and in the other, you have to wait for it."

"Till when?"

She laughed, somewhat uneasily, and asked him what he meant.

"I hardly know how to make my question plainer, Miss

Faith. I suppose I am of an impatient disposition, but the idea of waiting an indefinite time for rest is not pleasant to me."

"But can you always get it as soon as you would like to have it?" — Faith asked with a kind of timid doubt, as not knowing but his power might extend so far.

"Why not? — seeing rest is like some sweet wind, which cannot blow its soft gale till there is a clear space for it, why should it linger when the space *is* clear? — why not rest when we are weary?"

"But can you always get the clear space for it?" Faith asked, looking at him wonderingly.

He smiled.

"I am talking of what may be done, Miss Faith — not of what I do. But I wish you would let me try my powers for you to-night. How comes there to be a demand? — how comes there *not* to be a supply?"

"Of rest?" said Faith. "Oh there is! At least," she added reluctantly, — "there will be. There is now, Mr. Linden."

"Equal to the demand?"

"Why do you ask me?" she said, a little troubled.

"I believe I have a bad habit of asking questions," said Mr. Linden — and his tone was apologetic in its very gentleness. "It is partly my fault and partly Pet's."

"Partly whose? Mr. Linden," said Faith. "*I* don't think it's a bad habit. *Whose* fault, did you say?"

"Pet's — my sister's — into whose company I hope to send you soon again."

"Oh — I mustn't thank you!" — Faith said, beginning and stopping herself somewhat comically.

"I don't know whether you will thank me for taking you past your own gate, which I was about to do," said Mr. Linden. "And I don't know whether the social and astronomical days ought to agree — but Hesperus set some time ago."

"I don't understand, Mr. Linden —" said Faith pausing.

"You must not expect to understand all astronomical things till you have studied astronomy," he said with a smile. "The practical application of my words is to sleep —

— " ' That knits up the ravelled sleeve of care;
Worn labour's bath; balm of hurt minds.' " —

With which soporific potion he bade her goodnight; and Faith went to her room marvelling *what* could have put into Mr. Linden's head just those particular words; and whether he had a quality of vision that could see through flesh and blood; and a little in doubt whether or not in the circumstances to find the words or the surmise 'balmy.' But if she wanted rest that night, or seemed to have wanted it, she had found it the next day, for she was all like herself. To speak with her own scrupulosity, there was perhaps just a shade of quieter gravity on her face and touching her smile, than there had been the day before. And that shade she kept.

It is a notable fact, that when Pleasure with her wand has roused into lively motion the waters of some mortal lake, she straightway departs; taking with her the sparkles, the dancing foam, and leaving the disturbed waves to deposit at their leisure the sediment which she has stirred up. Withered leaves flung upon the bank, a spot here and there of discoloured froth, — these are what remain. Thus in the quiet nooks and corners of Pattaquasset were trophies not too bright of the celebration. Thus did Pattaquasset people behold some of the hidden evil in their neighbours, and likewise in themselves. The boys indeed maintained their serenity and kept Pleasure with them but in other quarters there were some heartburnings — most of all at Squire Deacon's. Relieved at first by the idea of a new rival — then by some intuitive belief thrown off that ground of comfort; the Squire was much in the condition of the man who wanted to commit an assault upon every small boy he met — for boys were to him representatives. But deprived by law of this manly way of expressing his feelings, the Squire sought some other. For the boys, they laughed at him — and at pretty much everything else; and having as I said

managed to keep Pleasure with them, the faces that greeted Mr. Linden on Friday morning were unusually bright.

Yet there were one or two exceptions. Sam Stoutenburgh was a little shamefaced in broad daylight — a little afraid of being laughed at; and Reuben Taylor, the head of the blue ribbands, was under a very unwonted cloud. It even seemed as if the day (no thanks to Pleasure) had done some work for Mr. Linden: perhaps he was considering how long he should be within reach of such ceremonies; or (perhaps) how soon he could be willing to put himself out of reach. And when he came home in the afternoon, it was with the slow, meditative step which reminded Faith of his first week in Pattaquasset.

"*You* are tired now, Mr. Linden," she said with a smile, but the burden of her remark in her eyes, as she met him in the porch.

"Boys are an extraordinary commodity to deal with!" he said looking at her, but answering the smile too. "I think you are bewitching all mine by degrees. Why cannot you confine your conjurations to the black cats of the neighbourhood? — like some of the real, respectable Puritan witches?"

Faith blushed very much at the beginning of this speech, and laughed at the last.

"What have I done, Mr. Linden? there are no black cats in the neighbourhood."

"Is that it?" said Mr. Linden — "I shall have to import a few. You give me a great deal of trouble, Miss Faith."

"I, Mr. Linden? I am very sorry! What have I done?"

"I don't know! — or at least but partially. There is Sam Stoutenburgh, making as much ado over his lessons as if his wits had forsaken him — which perhaps they have. There is Reuben Taylor — I don't know what is the matter with Reuben," he said, his tone changing, "but his last words to me were a very earnest entreaty that I would persuade you to see him for five minutes; and when I wanted to know why he did not prefer his own request, all I could get was that he was not

sure you would let him. Which gave me very little clue to the sorrowful face he has worn all day."

Once more, and this time with the keen tinge of pain, the blood rushed in a flood to Faith's cheek and brow; and for a second she put her hands to her face as if she would hide it. But she put them down and looked up frankly to Mr. Linden.

"I am sure Reuben Tailor has done no wrong!" she said. "You may tell him so, Mr. Linden."

"Wrong!" he said — "to you?" — and the tone was one Faith did not know. Then with a manner that was like enough to the flinging of the little stone into Kildeer river, he added, "Yes, I will tell him. Miss Faith, I shall be down again directly, and then will you let me see that book?" And he passed on upstairs.

The book was on the table in the parlour when he came down, but Faith met him standing. With a little timid anxiousness, she said,

"I have done wrong now. Mr. Linden, I said I was sure Reuben had *not* done any, and you will not speak to him as if he had? Please don't speak to him at all — I will see him myself."

The answering smile broke through some little cloud of feeling, in spite of him.

"You need not fear," he said, — "I know Reuben Taylor. But you have got something else to think of just now." Then placing a chair for her at the table, Mr. Linden took up the little book and began his work of examination. And perhaps it is not too much to say that even Dr. Harrison might have learned somewhat from the way it was carried on. A skilful and kind way of finding out what she did not know, from what she did; initiation and examining so carried on together that Faith found herself knowing where she thought she was ignorant, — more still, perhaps, a kind of separate decision what she *ought* to learn, and how; which saved her the trouble of acknowledging and confessing; and all as gently done as if he had been dealing with some delicate winged creature,

whose downy plumage would come off with a touch, — such was the threatened examination. She might flutter a little under his hand, but the soft wings were unhurt.

"Tell me first, Miss Faith," he said turning over the leaves, "What you have been doing here by yourself."

"I have been all through it," she said; 'fluttering' sure enough, yet as much with pleasure as with timidity; not at all with fear.

"Will you work these out for me —" and he gave her half a dozen different tests on a bit of paper.

She coloured, and he could see her hand tremble; but she was not long doing them, and she did them well, and gave them back without a word and without raising her eyes.

"Well," said Mr. Linden, smiling a little as he looked at the paper, "if it takes half an hour to hear Charles twelfth his lesson, and Johnny gives you but one quarter the trouble, and Rob Waters about twice as much as Johnny, how much time will you spend upon them all?"

"It will be about an hour — wanting an eighth," she said without raising her eyes, but with a bit of a smile too.

"I hear you and Johnny have arranged preliminaries, Miss Faith."

"Yes," said Faith looking up brightly, "he came to shew me his ribband and to tell me last night. But I was almost sorry, Mr. Linden, — that you should send *him* away from you."

"For Johnny's sake, or my own?"

"For his sake — certainly."

"You need not speak so assuredly — there were two parties to the question — besides you. But I have him still, you know, in a way. What has been in hand since this little book was finished?"

"Nothing — except the Philosophe, — and —"

"Well? — isn't that blank to be filled up?"

"And Shakspeare," said Faith casting down her eyes.

"I cannot let you confine yourself to the study of human

nature," said Mr. Linden, — "that will never do. Charles twelfth and Shakspeare want ground to stand upon. Did you ever read anything of Physical Geography?"

She shook her head. "I don't know what that is, Mr. Linden."

"Then I will have the pleasure of introducing you. Ordinary geography is but a shell without it. And if we accidentally go deeper down than the stratum of geography, I will try and bring you back safe. But Miss Faith, you have not done with this book yet — the subject-matter of it. I want you to carry that further."

"Well," she said smiling, — "I like it. I am ready. What comes next, Mr. Linden?"

"Did you pay any attention to the algebra part of the examination yesterday?"

"Yes, I believe so. I paid attention to it all — I didn't understand what some of it was about, but I believe I know what you mean."

"How should you like to work with letters and signs instead of figures? By the way, Miss Faith, your sevens are too much like your nines, and if you drew a check for $500 with that five, you might find yourself paying out $800."

She coloured again, but bowed her head in assent, quite ignoring in her interest in the subject the extravagance of the supposition by which he illustrated it.

"You shall not say that again, Mr. Linden."

"Don't pledge yourself for me," he said smiling, — "I am a lawless kind of person, as perhaps you have found out. But if I were to spend one minute well on the first day of the year, and each succeeding day add to my well-spent minutes so many more as the year was days old — how much of December would be well spent?"

But Faith could not tell.

"You see what is before you —" Mr. Linden said; "you must work that out, Miss Faith, in more ways than one. Well tell me this — Which is nearest to us now, — my sister Pet or

the Khan of Tartary, — supposing her in Rome and him in his own dominions?"

Faith coloured again, a good deal, and with some sorrow.

"I am glad you asked me," she said; — "I want you should know it, — butI don't know anything about that, Mr. Linden. I know a *little*, of course," she said correcting herself, "but I couldn't answer you."

"But why can't you understand," he said looking at her, "that I am just some old, torn, dog-eared book of questions that you are looking into for the first time? I don't like to be made to feel like a bran new schoolbook."

Faith looked at him, and probably the words "old, torn, and dog-eared" made a peculiar contrast, for her eye flashed and in spite of everything she laughed, her musical little laugh.

"That sounds reasonable," said Mr. Linden. "I like to be laughed at. But Miss Faith — just suppose for a moment that there were tears in your eyes, — what could keep them from falling?"

Faith's eyes opened and she took a little time to consider this proposition.

"If I were very determined, I think I could do it," she said.

"Suppose they got so far as the tip ends of your eyelashes?" he said, with a little play of the lips.

"They must come down, I am afraid," said Faith looking and wondering.

"But why?"

"Because my determination couldn't reach them there, I suppose," she said in unmitigated wonder. "There would be nothing to keep them up."

"Unphilosophic!" he said gravely, — "I shall have to teach you both why your tears fall, and why they don't."

She smiled, as very willing to be taught, but with a face that looked as if it had had few to experiment upon either way.

"I will try and not tire you out," Mr. Linden said, "but

different things go on pleasantly together. Some I should like to have you study for me when I am away, some directly with me. And —"

"And what, sir?" she said with the gentle intonation of one to whose ear every word is pleasant.

"How much time have you in the course of the day that can and ought to be spent upon all these matters — without disturbing Shakspeare and his companions?"

"I will *make* time, Mr. Linden, if I don't find it. I have a good deal. You won't tire me."

"You must not make time out of strength. Will you write me a French exercise every day, among other things? Yes Cindy," he said — "I understand," — apparently quite aware that Faith did not.

"I will try," said Faith, with a colour again that was not of *French* growth.

"Well baint you comin'?" said Cindy, who stood still as if she liked the prospect before her.

"Yes, but I can find my own way," said Mr. Linden; at which gentle hint Cindy vanished. And Faith sprang up.

"Teaching all day," she said, "and no tea either!" — And she was about to run off, then paused to say,

"That is all, Mr. Linden? — do you want to say anything more?"

"It was not tea, Miss Faith, — Reuben is at the door. Will you see him? Shall I bring him here or will you go there?"

"I will go there," said Faith hurriedly. But Mr. Linden followed her.

"Reuben," he said, "Miss Faith will hear you — and I am ready to answer for your word with my own;" — then he went back into the sitting room and closed the door.

But those words seemed to touch at least one sore spot in the boy's heart — he had to struggle with himself a moment before he could speak. Then it was low and humbly.

"Miss Faith — I don't know just what Phil has said about me, — I can't find out. But whatever it is there isn't one

word of it true. I never said one word about you, Miss Faith, that I wouldn't say to you, just the same!" And Reuben looked as if he would have confronted the whole world on that point.

"I am quite sure of it, Reuben," Faith said very gently. "I didn't need you to come and tell me so."

He looked up at her with both gladness and thanks in his eyes.

"I shouldn't have troubled you with my trouble at all, Miss Faith — only he said you were displeased with me — and I was afraid it might be true."

"Who said I was displeased with you?"

An involuntary glance of Reuben's eye towards the closed door, seemed to say he did not want his words to go far.

"Dr. Harrison, Miss Faith. At least I thought he said so."

"Did he speak to you?"

"Yes ma'am — and just pushed my word out of the way when I gave it, — said it might be well enough to tell people but he didn't think you liked it. And so I got vexed. I'm so used to Mr. Linden," Reuben said — as if in excuse.

"Are you satisfied now, Reuben?" said Faith, giving him a good look of her eyes.

A little qualified his look was — perhaps because he had been too much troubled to have the traces go off at once; but there was no want of satisfaction in his,

"O yes, Miss Faith — I can't tell you how thankful I am to you! Goodnight, ma'am."

Faith went back to the parlour. And then Mr. Linden, taking from his pocket a piece of broad dark blue ribband, and laying it lightly round Faith's shoulders, told her gravely, "that she was entitled to wear that for the rest of the evening."

Faith matched the blue with red, and stood eying the ribband which she had caught as it was falling from her shoulders, seeming for a minute as if she had as much as she could bear. Rallying, she looked up at Mr. Linden to get a little more light as to what he expected of her, or what he

meant. But unless she could read a decided opinion that the two 'favours' looked better together than separate, his face gave her no information. Then smiling he said,

"I don't mean that you *must* wear it — merely that you have the right."

Faith gave another glance at his face, and then without more ado tied the blue ribband round her waist, where as she still wore the white dress of yesterday, it shewed to very good advantage. She said nothing more; only as she was quitting the room now in earnest to get tea, gave him an odd, pleasant, half grateful, half grave little smile. Too many things however had been at work to admit of her coming down into quietness immediately. The red left her no more than the blue for the rest of that evening.

CHAPTER XVI.

SATURDAY was but a half holiday to Mrs. Derrick's little family — unless indeed they called their work play, which some of them did. It was spent thus.

By Mrs. Derrick, in the kitchen, in the bed-rooms, all over the house generally — with intervals at the oven door.

By Mr. Linden in the sitting-room, where Faith came from time to time as she got a chance, to begin some things with him and learn how to begin others by herself. The morning glided by very fast on such smooth wheels of action, and dinner came with the first Natural Philosophy lesson yet unfinished. It was finished afterwards however, and then Mr. Linden prepared himself to go forth on some expedition, of which he only said that it was a long one.

"I am going to petition to have tea half an hour later than usual to-night, Miss Faith," he said.

"*Just* half an hour later, Mr. Linden?" she said smiling. "You shall have it when you like."

"I hope to be home by that time — if not don't wait for me. You will find all the materials for your French exercise on my table."

Which intimation quickened Faith's steps about the little she had beforehand to do, and also quickened a trifle the beating of her heart. It was not quiet — timidity and pleasure were throbbing together, and throbbing fast, when she turned her back upon the rest of the house and went to Mr. Linden's room. She would have a good uninterrupted time this afternoon, at any rate. And the materials were there, as he had said, — all the materials; from books, open and shut, to the delicate white paper, and a pen which might be the very one Johnny Fax thought could write of itself. Faith stood and looked at them, and then sat down to work, if ever such a determination was taken by human mind.

She had been a good while absorbed in her business when a knock came to the front door, which Faith did not hear. Cindy however had ears to spare, and presently informed Mrs. Derrick that a gentleman wished to see her. And in the sitting-room Mrs. Derrick found Dr. Harrison.

"You haven't *forgotten to remember* me, I hope, Mrs. Derrick," he said as he took her hand. He looked very handsome, and very pleasant, as he stood there before her, and his winning ease of manner was enough to propitiate people of harder temper than the one he was just now dealing with.

"No indeed!" said Mrs. Derrick; "I remember a great many things about you," — (as in truth she did.) "But I daresay you've changed a good deal since then. You've been gone a great while, Dr. Harrison."

"Do you *hope* I have changed? — or are you afraid I have?"

"Why I don't think I said I did either," said Mrs. Derrick smiling, for she felt as if Dr. Harrison was an old acquaintance. "And I suppose it makes more difference to you than to me, anyway." Which words were not blunt in their intention, but according to the good lady's habit were a somewhat unconscious rendering of her thoughts. "How's Miss Sophy, after her holiday? I always think play's the hardest work that's done."

"I am very sorry you found it so!" said the doctor.

"You needn't be —" said Mrs. Derrick, rocking complacently and making her knitting needles play in a style that certainly might be called work, — "I've got over it now. To be sure I was tired to death, but I like to be, once in a while."

The doctor laughed, as if, in a way, he had found his match.

"And how is Miss Derrick?" he asked. "If she was tired too, it was my fault."

"I guess that 'll never be one of your faults, Dr. Harrison," said Mrs. Derrick, — "it would take any amount of folks to tire *her* out. She's just like a bird always. O she's well, of course, — or I shouldn't be sitting here."

"And so like a bird that she lives in a region above mortal view, and only descends now and then?"

"Yes, she does stay upstairs a good deal," said Mrs. Derrick, knitting away. "Whenever she's got nothing to do down here. She's been down all the morning."

"I can't shoot flying at this kind of game," said the doctor; — "I'll endeavour to come when the bird is perched, next time. But in the meanwhile, Miss Derrick seemed pleased the other night with these Chinese illuminations — and Sophy took it into her head to make me the bearer of one, that has never yet illuminated anything, hoping that it will do that office for her heart with Miss Derrick. The heart will bear inspection, I believe, with or without the help of the lantern."

And the doctor laid a little parcel on the table. Mrs. Derrick looked at the parcel, and at the doctor, and knit a round or two.

"I'm sure she'll be very much obliged to Miss Harrison," she said. "But I know I shan't remember all the message. I suppose *that* won't matter."

"Not the least," said the doctor. "The lantern is expected to throw light upon some things. May I venture to give Mrs. Derrick another word to remember, which must

depend upon her kindness alone for its presentation and delivery?"

Mrs. Derrick stopped knitting and looked all attention.

"It isn't much to remember," said the doctor laughing gently. "Sophy wishes very much to have Miss Derrick go with her to-morrow afternoon. She is going to drive to Deep River, and wished me to do my best to procure Miss Derrick's goodwill, and yours, for this pleasure of her company. Shall I hope that her wish is granted?"

Now Mrs. Derrick, though not quick like some other people, had yet her own womanly instincts; and that more than one of them was at work now, was plain enough. But either they confused or thwarted each other, for laying down her work she said,

"I know she won't go — but I'll let her come and give her own answer;" and left the room. For another of her woman's wits made her never send Cindy to call Faith from her studies. Therefore she went up, and softly opening the door of the study room, walked in and shut it after her.

"Pretty child," she said, stroking Faith's hair, "are you very busy?"

"Very, mother!" — said Faith looking up with a burning cheek and happy face, and pen pausing in her hand. "What then?" —

"Wasn't it the queerest thing what I said that day at Neanticut!" said Mrs. Derrick, quite forgetting Dr. Harrison in the picture before her.

"What, dear mother?"

"Why when I asked why you didn't get Mr. Linden to help you. How you do write, child!" — which remark was meant admiringly.

"Mother!" — said Faith. "But it can be done" — she added with quiet resolution.

"I'm sure it never could by me, in that style," said Mrs. Derrick, — "my fingers always think they are ironing or making piecrust. But child, here's Dr. Harrison — come for nobody knows what, except that Sophy took it into her

head to send her heart by him — as near as I can make out. And he wants you to go to Deep River to-morrow. I said you wouldn't — and then I thought maybe you'd better speak yourself. But if you don't like to, you sha'n't. I can deal with him."

"I don't want to see Dr. Harrison, mother! — To-morrow?" said Faith. "Yes — I will see him."

She rose up, laid her pen delicately out of her fingers, went down stairs and into the sitting-room, where she confronted the doctor.

Faith was dressed as she had been at the party, with the single exception of the blue ribband instead of the red oak leaves; and the excitement of what she had been about was stirring both cheek and eye. Perhaps some other stir was there too, for the flush was a little deeper than it had been upstairs, but she met the doctor very quietly. He thought to himself the lanterns had lent nothing with their illumination the other night.

"No, sir," she said as he offered her a chair, — "I have something to do; — but mother said —"

"Will the bird perch for no longer than this?" said the doctor, turning with humourous appeal to Mrs. Derrick who had followed her.

"My birds do pretty much as they like, Dr. Harrison," said Mrs. Derrick. "They always did, even when I had 'em in cages."

"Then this bird is free now?"

"I guess you'd better talk to her —" said Mrs. Derrick, taking her seat and her knitting again.

"Miss Derrick!" said the doctor obeying this direction with an obeisance, — "you are free to command, and I can but obey. Will you go with Sophy to-morrow to Deep River? I am not altogether uninterested, as I hope to have the honour of driving you; but she sends her most earnest wish."

"To-morrow is Sunday, Dr. Harrison."

"Well — isn't Sunday a good day?"

"It isn't mine," said Faith gently.

"Not yours?" said the doctor. "You have promised it away, and we are so unfortunate?"

Her colour rose a little, but it was with an eye as steady as it was soft that she answered him.

"The day belongs to God, Dr. Harrison — and I have promised it, and myself, away to him."

The doctor looked astonished for a minute. And he gazed at her.

"But, my dear Miss Derrick, do you think there is anything contrary to the offices of religion in taking a pleasant drive, in a pleasant country, in pleasant weather? that is all."

Faith smiled a little, gravely; it was very sweet and very grave.

"There are all the other days for that," she said. "God has given us his work to be done on his day, Dr. Harrison; and there is so much of it to do that I never find the day long enough."

"You are right!" he said — "You are quite right. You are a great deal better than I am. I am sorry I asked you, — and yet I am glad. — Then Miss Derrick, will you forgive me? and will you some other day shew that you forgive me and be so good as to go with us?"

But Faith's interest in the subject was gone.

"I am very busy, sir," she said. "I have work to do that I do not wish to put off."

"Cannot you go with us *at all?* We will wait and make it any day?"

"Do not wait," said Faith. "I *could* go, but I could not go with pleasure, Dr. Harrison. I have not the time to spare, for that, nor for more now. Please excuse me."

And she went.

"Mrs. Derrick," said the doctor musingly, "this is a winged creature, I believe — but it is not a bird!"

At which Mrs. Derrick looked at him with a mingled satisfaction that he had got his answer, and curiosity to know

what he thought of it. For the further she felt herself from her child's high stand, the more presuming did she think it in any one to try to bring *her* down from it.

"If I thought, as I came here, that I walked on a higher level than the generality of mankind, as perhaps in the vanity of my heart I did, — I feel well put down on the ground now," pursued the doctor. "But Mrs. Derrick, when may I hope to see this winged thing of yours again?"

It must be confessed that Mrs. Derrick did not admire this speech, — 'a winged thing,' as she justly thought, was a somewhat indefinite term, and might mean a flying grasshopper as well as a canary bird. Therefore it was with some qnickness that she replied,

"What sort of a winged thing are you talking of, doctor?"

"Nothing worse than a heavenly one, madam. But angel or cherub are such worn-out terms that I avoided them."

He was standing yet where Faith left him, looking down gravely, speaking half lightly, to her mother.

"I don't know who'll see her when she's an angel," said Mrs. Derrick, with a little flush coming over her eyes. "But she wouldn't thank you for calling her one now," she added presently, with her usual placid manner. "Won't you sit down again, doctor?"

"May I ask," said he eying her, somewhat intent upon the answer, — "why she wouldn't thank me for calling her one now? — by which I understand that it would incur her displeasure."

"Why — why should she?" said Mrs. Derrick, who having dropped a stitch was picking it up with intentness equal to the doctor's.

"True!" said the doctor in his usual manner. "Angels don't thank mortals for looking at them. But Mrs. Derrick, when may such a poor mortal as I, stand a chance of seeing this particular one again?"

Mrs. Derrick laid down her work.

"Well you *have* changed!" she said, "there's no doubt of that! I don't recollect that you used to care so much about

seeing her when you were here before. If I don't forget, you set your dog on her cat. And as to when you'll see her again, I'm sure I can't tell, doctor. She's a busy child, and folks out of the house have to do without seeing her till she finds time to see them." Whereat Mrs. Derrick smiled upon Dr. Harrison with the happy consciousness that she was one of the folks *in* the house.

The doctor stood smiling at her, with a half humourous, quite pleasant expression of face.

"Set my dog on her cat!" he exclaimed. "*That* is why she would be angry with me for calling her a cherub! —

"'Tantæ ne animis celestibus iræ!'"

The doctor sat down.

"What shall I do!" he said. "Advise me, Mrs. Derrick."

"I know what I should have done if I'd got hold of you," said Mrs. Derrick. "I thought I never would speak to you again — but you see I've got over it."

"I'm not sure of it," said the doctor meditatively. "'Folks out of the house' — well! It strikes me I've been 'in' to little purpose this afternoon." — He rose again. "Where is Mr. Linden? is he 'out', or 'in', this fine day?"

"He's out this afternoon," said Mrs. Derrick. "I was thinking to ask you if you wanted to see him, and then I knew it was no use."

"Yes, I should like to see him," said the doctor; "but as he is a mortal like myself, I suppose I can find him another time by the use of proper precautions."

And Dr. Harrison took his departure.

Mrs. Derrick on her part went upstairs again, and opening the door merely peeped in this time.

"What is it, mother?"

"Are you busy yet, child?"

"Not quite through."

"I thought," said Mrs. Derrick stepping softly into the room, "that we'd go down to the shore this afternoon, and maybe dig some clams. I don't know but it's too late for that

— we might ride down and see. You're tired, pretty child — and other people won't like that a bit more than I do."

"I'd like to go, mother — I'm almost done, and I'm not tired," Faith said with happy eyes. "There is time, I guess, for Mr. Linden don't want tea as early as usual. I'll come soon."

Mrs. Derrick withdrew softly, and again Faith was entirely lost in her business. But she had nearly done now; the work was presently finished, the books put up in order, and the papers, with the exercise on top; and Faith stood a moment looking down at it. Not satisfied, but too humble to have any false shame, too resolute to doubt of being satisfied and of satisfying somebody else, by and by. And the intellectual part of her exercise she thought, and with modest reason, would satisfy him now. Then she went down to her mother, quite ready for the beach or for anything else.

It was one of those very warm October days which unlearned people call Indian summer, — the foreground landscape yellow with stubble fields and sered forest, the distance blue with haze. So soft and still, that the faint murmur of the wheels as they rolled along the sandy road sounded as if at a distance, and the twittering birds alone set off the silence. Now and then came a farm wagon loaded with glowing corn, then the field where the bereaved pumpkins lay among the bundles of cornstalks. Sportsmen passed with their guns, schoolboys with their nut-bags, and many were the greetings Faith received; for since the day at Neanticut every boy thought he had a right to take off his hat to her. From the midst of his cornfield, Mr. Simlins gave them a wave of his hand, — from the midst of its blue waters the Sound sent a fresh welcome.

"I declare, child," said Mrs. Derrick, as they neared the shore, "it's real pleasant!"

"The tide's out, mother," said Faith, who had the spirit of action upon her to-day — " we can get some clams now, if we're quick."

"I don't know but you're learning to be spry, among

other things," said her mother looking at her. "I thought you were as spry as you could be, before. What haven't you done to-day, child!"

Faith laughed a little, and then jumping out of the wagon and helping her mother down, was certainly 'spry' in getting ready for the clam-digging. Her white dress had been changed for a common one and that was carefully pinned up, and a great kitchen apron was put on to cover all but the edges of skirts as white as the white dress, and with shoes and stockings off, basket and hoe in hand, she stood ready almost before her mother had accomplished fastening up old Crab to her satisfaction. Mrs. Derrick on her part prepared herself as carefully for work (though not quite so evidently for play) and the two went down to the flats. The tide was far out, — even the usual strips of water were narrow and far apart. Wherever they could, the little shell-fish scrambled about and fought their miniature battles in one-inch water; but at the edge of the tall shore-grass there was no water at all, unless in the mud, and the shell-fish waited, by hundreds, for the tide. Here was the scene of action for the two ladies. Walking daintily over the warm mud with their bare feet, which however white and twinkling at first were soon obliged to yield to circumstances; disturbing the little shell-fish — who in turn disturbed them, by very titillating little attacks upon the aforesaid feet, — Mrs. Derrick and Faith marched up to the edge of the grass and there sought for clam holes. The war went on after this fashion. A clam hole being found, the hoe was struck far down into the mud to *unearth* the inhabitant; which the clam resenting, spit up into the intruder's face. But the intruder — proof against such small fire — repeated the strokes, and the clam was soon brought to light and tumbled ignominiously into the basket, — to be followed every second or two by another of his companions; for the clam holes were many. The basket was soon full, but not before the cool ripple of the tide had passed the muscle rocks and was fast coming in-shore.

"Well I do think play's hard work!" said Mrs. Derrick,

bringing herself once more to an erect position — "I told Dr. Harrison so this morning. How you and Mr. Linden stand it, Faith, I don't know."

"What, mother?" said Faith, making a descent upon another promising clam shell. But Mrs. Derrick always preferred to go on with her remarks.

"It's good he's doing it, for his own sake, I guess," she said, — "he's done nothing but work ever since he came to Pattaquasset."

"Doing what, mother?" said Faith. "What *are* you talking of?"

"Why I'm talking of you, child!" said her mother, — "you and Mr. Linden. One of you played all the morning and the other's going to play all the afternoon. But I think you've done enough, Faith — it won't do to get sick so long as we've nobody but Dr. Harrison to depend on. I don't believe *he*'s much of a doctor."

"Played all the morning?" said Faith taking up her basket, — "it was better than play to me. I wish I could do something for *him*, mother!"

Very gravely, and even a little sorrowfully, the last words were said.

"Why yes," said Mrs. Derrick stoutly. "Never tell me it's anything but play to teach you, child — he didn't look as if it was, neither. I thought he got his pay as he went along."

Faith knew he had looked so; but that was not Faith — it was Mr. Linden, in her account.

"Dr. Harrison ought to be a good doctor, mother," she remarked, leaving the subject. "He has had chance enough."

"La, child," said Mrs. Derrick, untying her apron, "chance don't prove anything. A man may have just as good a chance to kill as he has to cure. By which I don't mean that *he* has, for I don't know."

"The tide is coming in, mother. We came just in the very point of the time. How pretty it is! —" said Faith;

standing in the blue mud, with her bare feet, and with the basket of clams in her hand, but standing still to look off at the flats and the dark water and the hazy opposite shore, all with the sunny stillness and the soft enveloping haze of October lying lovingly upon them. Faith thought of the 'glory' again, and watched to see how water and shore and flats and sky were all touched with it. One or two sails on the Sound could not get on; they lay still in the haze like everything else; and the 'glory' was on them too. She thought so. It seemed to touch everything. And another glory touched everything, — the glory of truth Faith had only for a little while come to know. She recognized it; there was 'light from heaven' in more senses than one; the glow of joy and hope unknown a while before; the softening veil of mind-peace over whatever might be harsh or sharp in actual reality. She did not run out all the parallel, but she felt it, and stood looking with full eyes. Not full of tears, but of everything pleasant beside.

Then came the drive home, with the air darkening every minute, but notwithstanding this, Mrs. Derrick stopped by the way.

"Faith," she said, "hold the reins, child — I won't be a second, but I've got something to see to in here;" and Faith was once more left to her meditations.

Not for long; for as she sat gazing out over old Crab's ears, she was 'ware' of some one standing by the wagon: it was Squire Deacon.

"I shall commence to think I'm a lucky man, after all!" said the Squire. "I was coming down to see you, Miss Faith, — and couldn't just resolve my mind to it, neither. I wanted to pay a parting visit."

"Were you? — are you going away, Squire Deacon?"

"Why yes," said the Squire, looking down at his gun — for he had been shooting, — "I've had considerable thoughts of taking a turn down to York. Cilly says she don't think it's worth my while — but I guess she don't know much more 'n

her own concerns. Pattaquasset's a good deal come round this season," he added, without specifying which way.

"Do you mean that you intend to forsake Pattaquasset entirely?" said Faith, noticing the comfortable supply of ducks in the Squire's bag.

"Well I can't just say — I'm not free to certify," said the Squire. "I said I thought it was worth my while to go, and so I do. I should like to know from your lips, Miss Faith, whether you'll make it worth my while to come back."

Faith was very glad it was so dark.

"I don't see how I can touch the question either way, sir," she said gently and with not a little difficulty. — "Wherever you are, I hope you'll be very happy, and very good, Squire Deacon."

"I should like something a little better grown than that, ma'am," said the Squire, striking his gun on the ground. "I can't just tell whether *that*'s wheat or oats. It's likely *my* meaning's plain enough."

Faith was dumb for a minute.

"I believe I understood you, sir," she said in a low voice. "I meant to answer you."

"Well what's to hinder your doing it, then?" said Squire Deacon.

"I thought I had done it," said Faith. "I have nothing to do with the question of your coming or going anywhere, sir, — and can't have, — except to wish you well, which I do heartily."

"That's your ultimate, is it, Miss Faith?"

"No, sir," said Faith, conquering the beating of her heart. "Squire Deacon, I want to see you *in heaven*."

And she stretched out to him her little hand frankly over the side of the wagon.

Squire Deacon took it for a moment — then dropped it as if it had burnt his fingers. And then with a voice in which whether sorrow or anger prevailed Faith could not tell, he said —

"Well — I don't blame *you*, — never did and never shall.

Cunning's been too much for me this time." And he took up his gun and strode off, just as Mrs. Derrick opened the house door and came out to take her place in the wagon again.

"Dear mother!" said Faith, — "why didn't you come sooner!"

"Why I couldn't, child!" said Mrs. Derrick. "That woman always will tell one every pain and ache she's had since the year one. What's the matter? — why didn't you tie Crab and come in, if you were lonesome."

Faith was silent.

"What's the matter?" repeated her mother, — "have you been getting sick after all I said to you?"

"Squire Deacon has been here talking to me," said Faith in a low tone.

"Well then you had company, I'm sure. What did he talk about? Come, Crab! — get on, sir!"

"He says he is going away from Pattaquasset, and he lays it to me, mother," she said after some hesitancy again.

"What does he lay it to you, for?" said Mrs. Derrick. "I don't believe he's going away, to begin with."

"He wanted me to say something to bring him back again," said Faith lower yet.

"O is that all!" said Mrs. Derrick composedly. "I knew that gun was loaded, long ago. Well what's the harm if he did? — it's not dangerous."

"I'm sorry," said Faith. "But mother, do make Crab get on! — it's time."

"It's not late," said Mrs. Derrick. "And don't you fret about Sam Deacon, child, — he always was a little goose — till he got to be a big one; but you needn't think he'll ever shoot himself for love of you, — he loves himself better than that."

And at this point, Crab — roused by the thought of his own supper — set off at a good round trot which soon brought them home. There was nobody there, however, not even Cindy; so the need of haste did not seem to have been urgent. Faith soon had the kitchen fire in order, and her clams in the

pot, and was for the next half hour thoroughly busy with them. Then she made herself ready for tea, and the mother and daughter sat together by the lamp, the one with her knitting the other with her book. But the extra half hour was already past.

"Faith," said Mrs. Derrick at last, "why wouldn't Mr. Linden do the other thing you asked him to?"

Faith looked up suddenly from her book, as if not understanding the question; then her head and her voice drooped together.

"I haven't asked him yet, mother."

"I didn't know but he'd some objection," said Mrs. Derrick. "Well I wish he'd come — I want my supper. I'm as tired as tired can be, paddling round there in the mud. How did you like your lantern, child?" she said as the clock struck half past seven.

Faith raised her head and listened first to the clock and for any sound that might be stirring near the house; then answered,

"I haven't looked at it, mother."

"What do you think of having supper?"

"Before Mr. Linden comes, mother? — well, if you like it, I'll get you yours — the clams are ready."

"I don't care," said her mother, — "I'm more sleepy than hungry. I'll just lie down here on the sofa, Faith, and you can wake me up when you hear him." And disregarding the cooked clams in the kitchen, Mrs. Derrick went to sleep and dug them all over again.

The clock ticked on, — softly, steadily, from the half hour to the hour, and from the hour to the half. Out of doors there was nothing stirring, unless the owl stirred between his unmusical notes, or Mr. Skip's dog did something but howl. Hardly a wagon passed, hardly a breath moved the leaves. Cindy, on her part, was lost in the fascination of some neighbouring kitchen.

And Faith at first had been lost in her study. But the sounding of eight o'clock struck on more than the air, and she

found, though she tried, she could not shut herself up in her book any more. Mrs. Derrick slept profoundly; her breathing only made the house seem more still. Faith went to the window to look, and then for freer breath and vision went to the door. It was not moonlight; only the light of the stars was abroad, and that still further softened by the haze or a mistiness of the air which made it thicker still. Faith could see little, and could hear nothing, though eyes and ears tried well to penetrate the still darkness of the road, up and down. It was too chill to stay at the porch, now with this mist in the air; and reluctantly she came back to the sitting-room, her mother sleeping on the sofa, her open study book under the lamp, the Chinese lantern in its packing paper. Faith had no wish to open it now. There was no reason to fear anything, that she knew; neither was she afraid; but neither could she rest. Half past eight struck. She went to the window again, and very gravely sat down by it.

She had sat there but few minutes when there came a rush of steps into the porch, and Cindy burst into the little sitting-room, almost too out of breath to speak.

"Here's a proclamation!" she said — "Mr. Linden's been shot at dreadful, and Jem Waters is down to fetch Dr. Harrison. I'm free to confess they say he aint dead yet."

With which pleasing announcement, Cindy rushed off again, out of the room and out of the house, being seized with a sudden fear that Jem Waters would forestall her in spreading the news. The noise had awaked Mrs. Derrick, and she sat looking at Faith as if *she* was first in her thoughts. Faith stood before her with a colourless face, but perfectly quiet, though at first she looked at her mother without speaking.

"Come here, pretty child," said her mother, "and sit down by me."

"Mother," said Faith, — but she would not have known her own voice, — "something has happened."

But the way Mrs. Derrick's arms came round her, said that she too had heard.

"Where can he be, mother?" said Faith gently disengaging herself.

"I don't know, child."

Faith was already at the door.

"Faith!" her mother said, following her with a quick step, — "stop, child!"

Faith put back a hand as if to stop *her* — she was listening.

There was not a sound. Faith went down the steps and stood at the gate. Not a sound still; and her mother said softly, "Faith, you must not go out."

She put one hand on her mother's arm, and clasping it stood without stirring; her other hand on the gate. In mingled sorrow and fear her mother stood, not knowing well what to do or what to say, — in that emergency where woman can only endure — where she is powerless but to suffer. Faith stood without moving head or hand.

And so they remained, they knew not how long, until Cindy once more presented herself and told her story more at length.

"You see I was down to Mis' Somerses, and so was Dr. Harrison; and Jem Waters come there for him. And Jem he makes up to Mis' Somerses Jenny, and to-night he wouldn't hardly speak to her — would't no how tell what he come for. So then Jenny got mad and she went and listened; and she said Jem wanted to catch up Dr. Harrison and run off with him — and the doctor he wanted his horse. I don' know how they settled it — but I'm free to confess I'm sleepy —" and Cindy once more disappeared, and the stillness settled down over all.

CHAPTER XVII.

On that eventful evening, Mr. Simlins had a husking bee; and in his barn were met a fair representation of the Pattaquasset men and boys — especially boys. And with busy hands and tongues the work went on, Mr. Simlins himself among the busiest. But in the midst of work and merriment

though the fair stillness of the night was unheeded, the sudden interruption which came brought everyone to his feet; it was a loud shriek from the house, a woman's shriek.

"Hold on!" said Mr. Simlins — "you all go ahead and I'll go quiet the distractions. I suppose Mrs. Hummins has seen another rat in the dairy. No — thank'ee — I like to kill my own rats myself and then I know they *air* killed."

So letting nobody follow him, Mr. Simlins left the barn and went over to the house. In the kitchen he found the full array of female servants, of his own house and the neighbours', one of whom hiding her face was rocking back and forth with the most incoherent exclamations; while all the rest, standing by in various attitudes, seemed to have got an extra pair of eyes apiece for the express purpose of looking on.

"Well!" — said Mr. Simlins — "where is it? I've got my stick ready. Hain't bit anybody, has he? — Or has somebody got my silver spoons? What's to pay?"

Now silver spoons there were none in Mr. Simlins' economy, and this was a proverbial expression well known in the household.

"O Mr. Simlins! Mr. Simlins!" cried the hysterical one, with a shudder, "there's a murdered man at the front door! — and I did shut it, but he might come round this way!"

"You be hanged! and shut up!" — was Mr. Simlins' remark in answer to this statement; and flinging down his stick on the kitchen floor with a rattle, he strode to the front door and opened it, having had the precaution to take a candle with him.

There was certainly a figure there, not standing, but sitting on the bench in an attitude that spoke of faintness; and of all the men in Pattaquasset, Mr. Simlins was perhaps most surprised to see that it was Mr. Linden. A white handkerchief ineffectually bound round his arm, but served to shew why he had tried to secure it there.

Mr. Simlins surveyed it all with his candle in about three seconds, and then said hoarsely, "What's this? Can you speak to me?"

But the power for that was gone, though a little parting of the lips spoke the intent. Mr. Simlins set down his candle and went back to the kitchen.

"Get some brandy, you fools!" said he. "Here's a friend o' mine got faint for want of his supper — been too long out shootin'. Fetch a glass of water here too! Jenny Lowndes, you go tell Jem Waters that 'ere plaguey black heifer has got out of the yard. You send him to me, and if you spile the frolic with your story I'll have nothing more to do with you, I give you *my* word!"

Mr. Simlins was obeyed. He himself went back with the water and the brandy, which he tenderly applied to Mr. Linden's forehead and lips, and seeing the handkerchief's ineffectual disposition had taken it off and bound it on tight by the time Jem Waters, one of his farm hands, had reached the porch. The two then taking the sufferer in their arms carried him into the house and into Mr. Simlins' room, which was on the first floor, where they laid him on the bed. Jem Waters was then despatched for Dr. Harrison, with orders to hold his tongue and not say what he was sent for. And Jem Waters, the swiftest runner in Pattaquasset, set off and ran every step of the way, till the doctor was found.

The cold applications, the resting posture, seemed to do their work, and Mr. Simlins was rewarded with a smile from both eyes and lips. He did not speak again however till he had seen a spoonful of brandy enter the lips; then with a grave concern that did not seem like Mr. Simlins, he said in a subdued tone,

"How do you find yourself? Can you speak now?"

"Not much —" Mr. Linden answered with some effort. "I find myself in very kind hands."

"Are you hurt anywhere else?"

"Somewhat — the shot scattered, I think."

There was a smothered execration, and then it was a very kind hand that renewed the touch of cold water to his forehead, though a big, brown and rough one.

"I've sent for the doctor — and now I'll get you a nurse. You keep quiet, till you can do something else."

Mr. Simlins gently went forth; and in a minute after was in the midst of his husking party in the barn.

"Reuben Taylor!" said the farmer — "You don't mind takin' a run, do you? Wouldn't you just as lieves help me catch that black heifer — afore she gets to Pequot?"

Renben started up, and signified his ability to catch anything whatever. He was not alone; for half a dozen others volunteered to be equally ready.

"You keep where you be!" said the farmer with a wave of his hand to the half dozen. "I don't let everybody chase that 'ere heifer — you've got to catch her by the head and not by the foot, I tell *you!* Reuben, you come along."

And getting him well outside of the barn and half way towards the house, Mr. Simlins said in a very low growl indeed,

"Mr. Linden's here — he's been hurt, somehow, in his arm — and he's kind 'o faint; I want you to stay by him till the doctor comes, and then let me know. If I don't keep in the barn they'll raise Plute — or they'll come in — and I'd as lieves they'd do one as 'tother."

By this time Mr. Simlins had reached the door of his room, and ushered Reuben in. He heard — and long remembered — the smothered cry which seemed to come no further than Reuben's lips as he stepped within the door; but after that the boy might have been made of iron, for his strength and steadiness. He walked up to the bedside and knelt down by it, with a look which again Mr. Simlins could not soon forget; but his face was quite calm, except in the first moment when Mr. Linden looked at him. The farmer was a man of iron too, yet his voice was low and changed from its usual wont when he spoke.

"It's only loss of blood, I guess," he said. "He'll get along. You give him brandy, and water, Reuben, if he wants it; and call me when Dr. Harrison comes. Can I do anything

else?" The last words were gently, even tenderly, addressed to the sufferer.

"No —" Mr. Linden said, with that same pleasant look of the eyes. "I think there is not much the matter — except what you said."

Mr. Simlins stalked off and was rather more grim than usual in the barn. The huskers had returned to their merriment, and the slight sound of wheels in the road from time to time of course attracted no attention. After one of these signals, however, Jem Waters appeared at the front door.

"Mr. Simlins there's a gentleman wants to see yer. I'll take yer place."

Very few strides did Mr. Simlins make between the barn and the house, and slight was his stay of greeting to Dr. Harrison.

"He's in here —" said he leading the way.

Reuben was just as Mr. Simlins had left him, — it seemed as if he had not once taken his eyes from the calm face before him. For very calm it was — reposeful; with not a line disturbed except where a slight contraction of the brow told of some physical discomfort. But he was not asleep, for he looked at them the moment they entered; and Reuben rose then, and stood leaning against the bedpost.

"I'm sorry to see you so," said the doctor. "What's the matter? and where?"

A little smile, a glance towards the bandaged arm, seemed to say there was nothing very bad, but that what there was it would be easier for him to have the doctor find out for himself.

Nor further did the doctor ask, but proceeded to work. And it appeared soon that Dr. Harrison at play, and Dr. Harrison at work, were two people — yet the same! The doctor did not indeed play at his work; yet the work was done with the same skilful ease that he brought to his play; an ignorant eye could see as much; and Mr. Simlins jealously looking on, felt very soon at ease as to the doctor's part in the scene before him. Dr. Harrison knew his business, and knew it well.

Mr. Linden's coat was removed, in the course of which operation a keen glance of the doctor's eye over at Reuben shewed that he recognized him; but then he attended to nothing but his patient. He found that a number of duck shot had been lodged in Mr. Linden's side and arm, the latter of which was somewhat lacerated, and this was the principal wound. The others were slight, the shot having taken a slanting direction and so rather grazed than penetrated. Dr. Harrison with care and skill went on to extract the shot and dress the wounds, which he did after the happy and simple regimen of modern discoveries; and ordered certain restoratives which he judged his patient needed. He did not speak except on business till he had seen these doing their work and Mr. Linden able to reply to him. And then his first words were to the farmer; who, not asking a question, had stood by as silent and watchful as Reuben himself; nearly as grave.

"There's nothing the matter with him, Mr. Simlins," he said. "He'll be able to shoot *you* in a day or two — if he has a mind. What have you been doing to him?"

"*Me!* I've been actin' the part of the good Syrian to him," growled Mr. Simlins; — "only I always thought before, the oil and wine went on the outside instead of the inside."

"I dare say," said the doctor lightly, probably not understanding the allusion. And then he seated himself on the side of the bed, looking down at his patient very much in his usual manner.

"You'll have made yourself the hero of Pataquasset, Linden," he said. "There won't another fellow stand a chance to be looked at for a month to come — from here to Quilipeak. You ought to be indicted for breach of the public peace."

"Don't try it —" said Mr. Linden. "I should doubtless prevail with the jury too."

"Ha? —" said the doctor with another glance over at Reuben. "Now how did this come about?"

"Quite suddenly — as I was walking home."

"Where were you?"

"About a mile from here, in the open road."

"Who was fool enough to be shooting ducks in the open road and mistake you for a specimen? — You are not at all the sort of man I should ever think of making game of."

"I tried hard to find out who it was," said Mr. Linden, —"but he was a better runner than I, or else my strength gave out."

"Why how did the thing happen?" said the doctor. "Run! — you don't suppose the fellow meant to hit you?"

"He meant to run —" said Mr. Linden.

The doctor looked at Mr. Simlins, with a serio-comical expression.

"Worse and worse!" said he. "It is a full-grown, regular built adventure; and this is a hero from head to foot."

"Which way did the fellow run?" said Mr. Simlins, with a growl that was ominous.

"Straight ahead — till he got into the woods," said Mr. Linden, smiling at his host. "But he probably turned there, Mr. Simlins."

"I'll have him!" said Mr. Simlins — "I'll foller his tracks, if they lead me to the two poles of the axletree! You tell me where you see him, and I'll set runners on, that won't give out neither."

"They'd be as likely to run against each other as any way, in this mist to-night," said the doctor. "You'd better leave all that till the morning. I'll see you again to-morrow," said he holding out his hand to Mr. Linden. "I suppose they don't know what is become of you at Mrs. Derrick's — I will stop there as I go home and make myself as famous as I can. Though 'the first bearer of unwelcome news' does not recommend himself to favour, yet *if* they have heard anything, on the whole they will thank me. I'll take my risk."

"I am a little inclined to ride down with you," said Mr. Linden.

"Folly!" said the doctor. "Mr. Simlins is acting a good part by you, he says, — which I presume is true, though I did

not understand his terms; but I have no doubt he'll prove himself good for a day or two's board and lodging. I wish I had had the pleasure of finding you at my own door, instead of his having it!"

"The question is whether I shall be good for a day or two — I have no doubt of Mr. Simlins."

"Does that mean you are going to disobey me? You grudge me that little bit of famousness?"

"I shall hear the orders *before* I disobey —"

The doctor looked at him a minute. "Linden," — said he, "— you're alarmingly well! but you must remain in quarters for another night or two. It would be dangerous to let you go. I can't allow it. Good night! —"

Either the stimulus of the doctor's presence had been strong, or the effort to appear well had been fatiguing; and Dr. Harrison would have pronounced another verdict had he seen his patient ten minutes later. When Mr. Simlins came back into the room, Mr. Linden looked pale and exhausted. He roused himself however, at once.

"Mr. Simlins," he said, "will you drive me into Pattaquasset to-night."

"You aint a goin' to do that?" said the farmer.

"That was my intention. Why not?"

"You aint fit for it, no ways! Can't you stop here one night and be peaceable?"

"Yes, both," said his guest smiling. "But if I do not go, I must send," he added after a minute's silence, during which perhaps some feeling of weakness came in aid of the doctor's orders. — "And I do not think it would hurt me to go."

"Send!" said Mr. Simlins — "there's lots to send. Here's Reuben, and Sam Stoutenburgh — the boys aint gone yet — and here's me. Who do you want to send to?"

"I want to send *for* two or three things out of my room. Reuben can go — and Sam may sit here with me, if you will sleep any better for it, Mr. Simlins. That is what *you* must do," he said with a look of warm interest and kindness.

"Sleep!" growled Mr. Simlins. "It's about all I'm good for!" (Which was not at all Mr. Simlins' abstract judgment concerning himself — purely comparative, on the present occasion.) "Well — you tell Reuben what you want him to do, and he can take the brown mare — Jem'll have her ready — and I'll send Sam to you; and after I get rid of all creation, I'll come myself. You'd think all creation was just made, and the chips about!"

After which setting forth of the state of his affairs Mr. Simlins went forth.

"I guess, sir," said Jem Waters when he had done his task with the mare, "I guess I'd as good sleep in the front porch to-night. 'Cause if there'll be one here, there'll be forty."

"What'll the forty do?"

"Knock the house down, sir, if there's nobody there to stop 'em. Bless you, sir, all Pattaquasset 'll come to hear how Mr. Linden is, afore day. There won't one on 'em wait two minutes after he hears the tale. It's all about by this time — I made one gal mad by not tellin' her, and I guess likely she's made it up for herself and other folks by now."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Dr. Harrison did not find anybydy at Mrs. Derrick's gate. The two, mother and daughter, had stood there, even after Cindy had come in with her report; unconscious, or unregardful,of the chill thick mist which enveloped everything and fell with steady heavy fall upon the bright hair of one and the smooth cap of the other. They had not spoken to each other all that while, unless an unfinished word or two of Mrs. Derrick's reached ears that did not heed them. It was Faith herself who first moved, perhaps reminded by the increasing chillness that her mother was feeling it too. She took her hand from the gate, and passing the other round Mrs. Derrick, led her into the house, and into the sitting-room and to a chair; and then went for wood and kindling and built up a

fire. She went to the kitchen next. That fire was out too, and that fire also Faith rebuilt, and coaxed till a blaze was going up round the cold tea kettle. Cindy sat with her head on her arms on the kitchen table, fast asleep. Faith did not wake her. In half an hour she brought into the sitting-room a tray with tea made, and clams warmed, and all things that should accompany the one teacup and saucer, and mutely set it before her mother. She did not then ask her to eat, except by this pantomime; and she herself immediately went again to stand in the porch. But again her mother followed.

"Child," she said, "you mustn't stand here. You'll be sick next. You must come right in and drink some hot tea."

Faith's quick answer was to put her hand upon her mother's lips. Her mother went on, softly and steadily, in spite of that slight obstruction. Yet not in spite of it, for her voice was very low.

"I know who'd say you ought to —" and she paused a little, as if to let her words have their full effect. Then with a curious sort of instinct she herself hardly perceived, Mrs. Derrick added,

"Dr. Harrison'll be sure to come — and you mustn't be standing here then."

For the first time Faith's head drooped, and she turned, but it was to pass her mother and go upstairs; laying her hand for an instant as she went, with a kind of caressing touch, on her mother's arm; then she was gone.

Mrs. Derrick stood where Faith left her, the still mist before her out of doors, the still house behind her. And there she stood until her ear caught the distant smooth roll of wheels. Softly it came, nearing her every minute, till Mrs. Somers' little wagon stopped at the gate, and Dr. Harrison jumped down and came towards her. Another had seen him, for Mrs. Derrick knew that a light step had come swiftly down stairs, but whither it went she knew not. The doctor spoke cheerily.

"Nasty thick evening! My dear Mrs. Derrick, do you

stand at the door to shew your hospitality in welcoming your friends, all night?"

"It *is* late," said Mrs. Derrick. The doctor's words were too slippery for her to get hold of; she waited for him to speak again.

"If it is late, my dear madam, why are you here? I don't want you to see me ever for anything but pleasure. Is it so late I mustn't come in?"

Mrs. Derrick stepped back into the hall — then stopped and turned.

"I was there to watch, Dr. Harrison. What have you got to tell me? One story has come already."

"Has it! Then I can tell you but half a one. I was thinking to make my fortune. Mr. Linden is spending the night at a friend's house, my dear Mrs. Derrick — that is all. He is as well as you are — though perhaps just at this minute not quite so strong as I am. But I am afraid he can boast more than that in another few days."

That Mrs. Derrick felt at once relieved, doubtful, unsatisfied, was clear. But the relief — slight as it was — brought back her hospitality; she led the way into the parlour.

"What has been the matter?" she said. "What *is* the matter?"

"*I* don't know," said the doctor. "He fell in with somebody carrying a gun — which was very likely to happen, seeing I have met a great many myself; but I never fell *out* with any of them yet — perhaps my time will come. — This fellow however, let off his gun in the wrong place and some of the shot hit Mr. Linden in the arm, and before he could get to Mr. Simlins, where I found him, he was a little faint. So I commanded him to stay where he was till morning. That's all. He's perfectly well, I give you my word. I came now on purpose to relieve you from anxiety. He wanted to come down with me, but I wouldn't let him."

"Why didn't you let him?" said Mrs. Derrick.

"Well, I came near letting him," said the doctor, — "for

I didn't know at one time that I could help it. It wouldn't have hurt him seriously. But he'll see you with more pleasure to-morrow."

"I can't think how you made out to hinder him at all!" said Mrs. Derrick, looking a little puzzled. "But I'm much obliged to you, doctor, for coming."

"Is he such a difficult person to deal with?" said the doctor, glancing at the different doors of the room.

"I never tried," said Mrs. Derrick with very simple truth.

"I must try, some time," said the doctor abstractedly: — "I like to deal with difficult people. — But I remember you remarked it was late! —" And he started up and was about to take his leave; when his purpose met with an interruption. For the swift trot of a horse upon the road came to as quick a pause at Mrs. Derrick's gate, and Reuben Taylor came up the steps and in at the open front door before Dr. Harrison had finished his compliments.

"I see!" said the doctor, — "you don't keep open doors for nothing, Mrs. Derrick. Here's another. You're not riding after me, my friend, are you? You don't let the grass grow!"

"No sir," said Reuben. "Good evening, Mrs. Derrick — may I go up to Mr. Linden's room?"

"How is he now, Reuben?" said Mrs. Derrick. "O yes, you can go up, of course."

"Thank you, ma'am — he said he was more comfortable when I came away." And with an almost imperceptible glance round the room he was in, Reuben turned and bounded lightly up the staircase. But all was dark there and in Mr. Linden's room. Reuben could not execute his commission so; and was turning to come down stairs again, when he encountered in the dim entry-way a white figure.

"How *is* Mr. Linden, Reuben?" said a voice which he knew, though it was in a very low key.

"Miss Faith!" Reuben said with a little start — "O I am so glad to find you!" — Then repeated gravely his former answer — "He said he was more comfortable when I came away, ma'am."

"Is he much hurt?"

Reuben hesitated.

"I don't rightly know, Miss Faith," he said, so low that she could scarce catch the words. "He says he's not — and Dr. Harrison says not, — I suppose I'm easy frightened."

"What makes you frightened, then?" she said quickly.

"I *was* frightened —" Reuben said, drawing a long breath, and with a sort of awe-stricken voice, as if the fright was upon him yet; — "and it takes a while to get over it. Maybe that's all. He wrote that, Miss Faith —" and Reuben laid a tiny folded paper in her hand. "And may I have a light, ma'am, to get some things from his room?" He spoke eagerly now, as if he grudged the moments.

Faith directed him to the kitchen, and when Reuben came up, followed him into the room and stood waiting while he sought what he wanted. Then suddenly remembered that her paper might contain a request for something else, and bent over the candle to read it. It contained more than one.

"Miss Faith," it said, "if any of my scholars are anxious about me, tell them, *from* me, that there is no cause. Bid them take rest — without 'waiting for it.' — I am sorry that exercise must wait! — but I shall hope to see *two* on Monday.

J. E. L."

Faith's head was bent a long while over the candle.

"Have you got what you wanted, Reuben?" she asked at last.

Reuben had heard her voice often, but he had never heard it like that — nor any one else. What had passed through it, clearing it so? it was like the chiming of silver bells. He came at her word, bag in hand; and — with the freedom a mutual sorrow gives, — held out his other hand to her. Then ran quick and softly down the stairs.

"Hollo, sir!" said the doctor, as Reuben passed the open doorway. "A word with you." Reuben paused, then came back a step.

"So you are Mr. Linden's friend, are you?" said the doctor in a careless manner.

"Did you want anything of me, sir?" Reuben said.

"Why yes — I commonly want an answer to a question."

"I don't just know what you mean by a friend, Dr. Harrison," said Reuben respectfully. "I might answer wrong."

"So rather than do that — You like to be on the safe side. Suppose you ask Mr. Linden to teach you definitions, among other things? And look here — keep him quiet and don't let anybody talk him out of his sleep to-night. That's all." And the doctor followed Reuben immediately.

With a feeling of satisfaction certainly, Mrs. Derrick at last locked and bolted the front door, shutting out the driving mist and all that might hide within it; and then went to look after the only treasure the house contained. She wasn't far to seek, for as the locking and bolting sounded through the house, Faith came down and went with her mother into the sitting-room.

"Have you had nothing to eat yet, mother!" she exclaimed as her eye fell on the orderly tea-tray.

"No child — nor sha'n't want it, till I see you have something."

Faith smiled a little, came and put her arms round her and kissed her; and then set about the whole work of getting tea over again. It was with a very pale face yet; only the silver ring of her voice told the change of the mental atmosphere. Her mother looked at her — but was perhaps afraid to ask any questions to disturb the quiet.

"Reuben's a good boy!" she said, feeling that remark to be perfectly safe.

"I'm glad he's there," Faith answered gravely. "I heard all Dr. Harrison said, mother."

"Yes child," said her mother — as if she knew that before, — "I thought you'd see Reuben too."

"Reuben said the same, mother. And Mr. Linden himself sent word there was no cause to be anxious."

Faith did not say he had written that word to her. Perhaps her own consciousness might have made her shy of the subject — or perhaps what she judged to be people's false

reports had left a sore spot in her heart and she was afraid of touching *that*. But she did not speak of the little note which had come to her. She was preparing her mother's tea with all speed, while Mrs. Derrick on her part peeped into the sugar-bowl to see if it wanted filling, and began to cut the bread.

"I'm glad to hear it, child," she said. "Dr. Harrison's too smart for me — I can't get a bit of good out of *him*. My, Faith! I suppose Mr. Linden can manage him, but if I had that man buzzing round *me*, I shouldn't know whether I was sick or well. When is he coming back, child?"

"I don't know, mother." — Then with the invincible instinct of truth, she added, "He wants my work to be ready for him Monday."

"Reuben's got a great deal of gumption!" said Mrs. Derrick, her heart quite expanding with the pleasure of hearing Faith talk once more. "Now half the boys in town would have blurted that right out to me and Dr. Harrison together, — and I wouldn't trust *him* for not asking questions. But I'm sure I'm glad, child — it seems as if he'd been gone a month. Do you think he'll come to-morrow? Maybe he meant you should send your work down to him."

"I sha'n't do that," said Faith, as she gave her mother at last a cup of tea that was to be drunk. But she had poured out none for herself. She sat before the tea-tray, still and pale. Her mother looked at her.

"You must take some, child."

"I don't want it, mother." — And she brought everything that was on the table round her mother's plate.

"You must —" Mrs. Derrick repeated. "I sha'n't, if you don't, — or else I'll get you a glass of wine. Why child," she said, with a half sober, half smiling look, which Faith for once did not read, — "he's better. You ought to eat and be thankful."

"I am thankful," — Faith said, her head sinking for a moment.

Mrs. Derrick deliberately got up, went to the pantry, and fetching thence a tiny cup and plate set them before Faith.

"Eat, pretty child!" she said. "You know I'm right. If you don't look out, Mr. Linden 'll be worse scared when he comes home than he's been to-day, I guess."

Faith gave her a look, both grateful and appealing, and very innocent of belief in her statement; — and did honour the little cup so far as to fill it with tea which she swallowed. But the plate she left clean.

"I can't to-night, mother," she said in answer to Mrs. Derrick's look. "I'll eat breakfast."

CHAPTER XIX.

It cannot be said that sleep came to Faith's eyes unbidden, — yet once come, sleep rested there sweetly, even beyond her usual time; and the first disturbing sound, in that misty Sunday morning, was the stopping of a wagon at the front door. But if Faith ran to the window with any special expectations, they were disappointed, — there was nothing at the door but Crab, his companion the little wagon, and Mrs. Derrick composedly getting out of the same. Which was at least surprising enough. The good lady's next appearance was a very noiseless one in Faith's room.

"Dear mother! where have you been?"

"Why I've been trying to get ahead of Dr. Harrison," said her mother sitting down; "and I did it too. I should have been home before if I hadn't been afraid of meeting him — so I had to take a cross road." Mrs. Derrick seemed tired.

"You needn't look at me so, child," she said, taking off her bonnet. "It's enough to see one pale face in a morning. I did see him, Faith, though I didn't speak to him."

"How did he look, mother?"

"I don't suppose he really looked bad — considering," said Mrs. Derrick, with the tired look on her own face; "but I am not used to seeing him pulled down. It sort of upset me to

see him lie there and those two boys keeping watch of him. I declare, Faith! I wouldn't like to be the one to touch him with them sitting by!"

"But how is he, mother? who did you see?"

"I didn't see anybody but them — Mr. Simlins wasn't up. They said he seemed better, dear — and that if I'd seen him last night I'd think he had quite a colour now: so I suppose he *is* better. Only I haven't got the heart of a kitten sometimes —" and a little motion of the lips warned Faith that if her mother was sparing of details it was because she could scarce give them.

"But isn't he as well as the doctor said? He would look pale, you know" —

"I shouldn't have known from what the doctor said, that he'd anything more than a scratch on the tip end of his little finger!" said Mrs. Derrick, — "so I believe I didn't expect even to see him look pale. And all the while, the doctor was staring at the pantry doors — I didn't know but he'd get up and open 'em and look in."

"You said *two* boys were there? who beside Reuben Taylor?"

"O Sam Stoutenburgh was 'tother side," said Mrs. Derrick, "and wanted to know how you were. I'd a great mind to tell him it was none of his business. I suppose he thinks his heart is as large as he is, and can hold everything at once."

A shadow of something seemed to cross Faith at the mention of Sam's name. She turned away and began dressing herself.

"Don't stir again, mother," she said. "I'll come down and see about breakfast."

"It'll rest me to go with you, child, — I told Reuben I'd come again and stay if Mr. Linden would let me, and Reuben will send me word. So I want to see you in the mean time. But I don't think they'll send."

The breakfast was a quiet meal, though Faith but poorly performed her promise of eating. How Faith spent the hour

after breakfast her mother could but guess; then she came out with her bonnet on and kissed her before setting off to Sunday school. The thick mist yet filled the air, growing yellow now with the struggling sunbeams. She walked quick and met nobody.

Till she came to her place, and there she found not Charles twelfth alone, but the two other little additions to her charge that had been promised her. For though it was by no means 'cold weather' — the warm sunny days lingering yet and this Sunday promising to be a good specimen, — it happened that Johnny and his companion had received a special injunction to come, as Faith found out, and were there accordingly.

And if Johnny regretted his old place in another class, it was not for the reason his new teacher had feared. Faith's face was very pale, — that of itself touched the children; and her words this day came in a tone that won all the recesses of their hearts. She had forgot about other teachers or children being in her neighbourhood; on those three her stores of love and tenderness poured themselves out. She told them with warm lips, of Christ and his love and his leading, — of the safety and joy of his sheep, — of her wish that her little charge should be lambs in that flock, and what sort of lambs they must be. Faith spoke to her children very much as if she had been a child herself. They knew instinctively, with very sure knowledge, that she belonged to the fold of which she was joyously telling them.

The children, on their part, met her variously. Johnny — with his clear childish eyes, the flower-like unfolding of his little heart to that warm sunshine — gave her more help than trouble, — she understood the liking to teach him for her own sake. If his thoughts sometimes wandered a little from her words, the downcast look, the slight quiver of his childish lips, told Faith where they had gone; and she could forgive him. But though at such times Robbie Waters always remembered to look grave too, yet he displaced Faith's gravity once by whispering to her (in the midst of her earnest admonitions to Charles twelfth) that 'she knew she was pretty';

and was in general in an easy, docile state of mind, and much interested and amazed at the 'deportment' of his little neighbour, Charles twelfth. When Faith came out of the school, she saw that all the seats of Mr. Linden's class were vacant; and with that little reminding touch, went to her own place in the church.

It was between nine and ten o'clock, while Faith was yet lost in her little charge, while Mrs. Derrick at home was thinking of her, and Mr. Simlins was taking his late breakfast, that Dr. Harrison's curricle reached the farmer's gate. All was quiet without the house, but when Jenny Lowndes admitted the doctor into the hall, the array of hats and caps upon the table might have startled a less professional man; might have even suggested the idea that Mr. Simlins was giving a breakfast party.

"Let me see Mr. Linden," said the doctor.

Jenny hesitated — then her fear of Dr. Harrison overcoming her scruples, she walked softly to the door and opened it. But if the doctor wanted to see his patient, he was obliged to wait a little; for the group of boys — some standing, some kneeling — around the bed, hid everything else. The room was very still, very *earnest;* even Dr. Harrison could feel that; the sound of words, very low-spoken, was all he could hear. The closing door made itself heard, however, — several boys turned round, and at once stepped aside; and the doctor saw his patient, not dressed but lying as he had left him the night before. Mr. Linden smiled — and saying some words to his class held out his hand towards the doctor; but this was fastened upon at once by so many, that the doctor again had to wait his turn; and it was not until everyone else had touched that hand, some even with their lips, that he was left alone with his patient.

"What are you doing?" said he, in a sort of grave tone which did not however mean gravity. "Holding a levee? — and do you receive your courtiers at different hours according to their ages? in that case I have come at the wrong time."

"No, you shall have the time all to yourself."

"I see I have it! Are the juvenile members of society in Pattaquasset accustomed to pay their respects to you at this hour in the morning?"

"Not always. Once a week we meet to talk over pleasant things."

"Have I interrupted the pleasant things now?"

"No, I could not talk very long this morning. The boys were just going."

"I wish I had come a little sooner," said Dr. Harrison. "I'm not a boy, to be sure, but I don't know that they are privileged to monopolize all pleasant things. If they are, I am against monopolies. However, if you can't talk, you mustn't talk. How do you do?"

"I do well — if a man can be doing well when he's doing nothing. I will talk as long as you please — about pleasant things."

The doctor however diverged to the state of his patient's health, nor would talk of anything else till his investigations on that point were made. The result of them seemed to be satisfactory.

"Now Linden," he said, in a tone that indicated they were free to ask and answer, — "who was that fellow last night? have you any idea?"

"It is difficult to identify a man when you are only within gunshot of him — and after sundown," said Mr. Linden smiling.

"Difficult — yes, it may be, — but you gathered something?"

"I gathered a run."

"That is," said the doctor looking at him, "you *have* an opinion on the subject and are not willing to risk it?"

"No," said Mr. Linden, "I have had risk enough for one night."

"You are mistaken, Linden. A hint might be quite enough to bring out the certainty. My father is very eager about the matter, and is only waiting for you to empower him to act."

"I shall give you no hint," said Mr. Linden. "I might be willing to risk my own opinion, but not another man's character."

The doctor looked at him keenly and curiously.

"What possible motive!" — he said. "For it is evident that the shot was fired of intent, and evident that you yourself think so. It is unheard-of!"

"Were you bred to the bar, that you sum up evidence before it is given?" said Mr. Linden, with a good-humoured raising of his brows at the doctor.

"But the man ran!"

"So did I — he could hardly think I was much hurt."

"I don't want to have such a fellow abroad in Pattaquasset," said the doctor. "But suppose we go back to the pleasant things. You must start the subject, Linden. Rousseau says a man can best describe the sweets of liberty from the inside of a prison — so, I suppose, you being shot at and laid on your back, can have no lack of theme."

Mr. Linden smiled — the smile of a most unfettered spirit.

"Liberty!" he said. "Yes, I have realized since I have lain here, that —

"'My soul is free, as ambient air,' —

"My sense of liberty comes from the possession — not the want."

"Prospective possession," — said the doctor. "Unless indeed," he went on with a humourous play of the lips — "you mean that my orders to you to lie still, merely gave zest to your triumphant knowledge that you could get up if you had a mind. A riotous degree of self-will that I believe I do not possess. Was that what good Mrs. Derrick meant when she said she wondered how I had hindered you?"

"No," said Mr. Linden smiling — "she meant that she did not think you had."

"She didn't mean a thing of the kind! She spoke in pure wonder, and made me begin to wonder in my turn."

Which wonder Mr. Linden did not inquire into.

"I am very sorry I wasn't a boy this morning!" said Dr. Harrison, after standing and looking down at him a little.

"Can't you sit down and say why?"

"I should have heard so much! — which now I am not to hear. For if I *had been* a boy, I should certainly not have been missing at your levee."

"O you deceive yourself, — if you were a boy nothing short of my authority would bring you, in the first place."

"I have not the slightest doubt the power would have been found equal to the resistance," said the doctor bowing.

"Neither have I."

"Well! —" said the doctor laughing a little peculiarly, — "in that case I should have been here. Now I have a fancy to know what you call pleasant things, Linden. You speak with a mouth full — as if there were plenty of them."

"Yes, there are plenty," Mr. Linden said, moving a little and resting his face on his hand as if he felt tired; "but we were talking of only two this morning, — heaven, and the way thither."

Dr. Harrison looked at him steadily.

"You are tired," he said gently. "You shall not talk any more to me now, and I shall forbid your holding any more levees to-day. After which," he added, the humourous expression coming back, "I shall expect to hear a proclamation going through Pattaquasset, that, like the knights of old, you are ready for all comers! — Well — I'll come and see you to-morrow; and as long as you'll let me, as a friend; for the pleasure of talking. You can have it all your own way, with a few more days' strength. Will you have a levee to-morrow at the same hour?"

A little play of the lips came with the answer —

"Will that suit you? — I'll send you word." Then looking up at the doctor with a different expression, he added, "What do you think of my pleasant things?"

"Hardly in my line —" said the doctor with a carelessness which was somewhat dubious in its character. "It is very well

for those who find the subject pleasant. I confess I have never studied it much."

"Then you have but half learned your profession." But the words were so spoken that they could not give offence.

Neither did the doctor seem disposed to take offence.

"I'll ask you what you mean by that to-morrow," he said very pleasantly. "I thought I *had* learned my profession. Have you learned yours?" The last words were with a keen eye to the answer.

"Some people dignify my present business with that name," Mr. Linden said.

"Well, you shall discourse to me more at length to-morrow," said the doctor. "Shall I come later?"

"I don't expect to be in school to-morrow, so you may name your own time," Mr. Linden said with a pleasant look. "But remember, — a physician who has no skill to feel the pulse of the mind, no remedies that can reach its fever or its chills, — is but half a physician. If *I* had never studied the subject, — one word about heaven and the way thither would be worth more to me than all the science of medicine ever discovered! It is now —" he said in a low tone, as the flush passed away. And then holding out his hand to Dr. Harrison, Mr. Linden added, "I fully appreciate your skill and kindness — you need not doubt it."

The hand was taken, and grasped, cordially but in silence.

Whether the doctor went straight from Mr. Simlins' house to church — where he was *not* a very constant attendant — it does not appear. What is certain about the matter, is, that he was outside of the church door after service just at the time that Faith Derrick found herself there, and that he assumed a place at her side and walked with her towards her mother's house instead of taking the other direction towards his own. Faith was alone, Mrs. Derrick having chosen to stay at home *in case* she should be sent for. The mist had cleared off completely, and the sunny warm air invited to lingering in it. Faith would not have lingered, but the doctor walked slowly, and she could not leave him.

"I have been wanting to see you, ever since my inopportune proposal yesterday," said he in a low tone, — "to make my peace with you."

"It is made, sir," said Faith, giving him a smile.

"How do you do to-day?"

"Very well!" she told him.

The doctor listened to the sound of her voice, and thought with himself that as regarded the moral part of her nature the words were certainly true.

"Let me have the pleasure of relieving you of that," — he said, taking Faith's little Bible gently away from her. "I am going your way. Miss Derrick — you spoke yesterday of particular work to be done on Sunday. Have you any objection to tell me what you meant by it? I confess to you, your words are somewhat dark to me. That is my fault, of course. Will you give me light?" It was a gentle, grave, quiet tone of questioning.

"Others might do it far better, sir," said Faith.

"I would far rather hear it from you!"

The colour came a little into Faith's cheeks, but her words were given with great simplicity.

"The other days are taken up very much with the work of this world — Sunday is meant more particularly for the work that belongs to the other world."

"And what is that? if you do not object to tell me. I confess, as I tell you, I am ignorant."

She forgot herself now, and looked steadily at him.

"To learn to know God — with whom we have so much to do, here and there; — to learn to know his will and to do it, and to bring others to do it too, if we can. — And if we know and love him already, to enjoy it and take the good of it," — she added a little lower, and with a softening of expression.

Dr. Harrison read her look fixedly, till she turned it away from him.

"And are these what you call pleasant things?" said he somewhat curiously.

But Faith's answer rang out from her heart.

"Oh yes!" —

She stopped there, but evidently not for want of what to say.

"You are a happy thing," said the doctor, but not in a way to make his words other than graceful. "I wish you would make me as good as you are."

She looked at him, and answered very much as if she had been speaking to a child.

"God will make you much better, Dr. Harrison, if you ask him."

He was silent a minute after that, without looking at her. When he spoke again, it was with a change of tone.

"You are of a different world from that in which I live; and the flowers that are sweet to you, belong, I am afraid, to a Flora that I have no knowledge of. What, for instance, would you call pleasant things to talk about — if you were choosing a subject of conversation?"

Faith looked a little surprised.

"A great many things are pleasant to me," she said smiling.

"I am sure of that! But indulge me — what would you name as supremely such, to talk about?"

"If they are talked about *right*," said Faith gently, "I don't know anything so pleasant as those things I was speaking of — what God will have us do in this world, and what he will do for us in the next."

"'Heaven and the way thither' —" said Dr. Harrison to himself.

"What, sir?" said Faith.

"I should like to have you answer me that; but I am sorry, I see Mrs. Derrick's house not far beyond us. — I saw our friend Mr. Linden this morning."

"Is he better?" said Faith simply.

"He's doing very well. I told him he'd be a terribly famous man after this. And it's begun. I found near all the boys in Pattaquasset assembled there this morning."

"His Bible class —" said Faith, with a feeling which did

not however come into her face or voice, and Dr. Harrison watched both.

"Here is *your* Bible," he said as they stopped at the little gate. "Do you always look so pale on Sundays?" he added with a look and tone of half professional half friendly freedom.

"Not always," Faith said; but there came at the same time a little tinge into the cheeks, — that Dr. Harrison wished away.

"May I come and earn your forgiveness for yesterday's stupidity?"

"Certainly!" Faith said, — "but there needs no forgiveness — from me, Dr. Harrison."

He left her with a graceful, reverential obeisance; and Faith went in.

CHAPTER XX.

Dr. Harrison had but little left Mr. Linden that morning, when Mr. Simlins came in. He had hardly seen his guest yet that day, except, like Mrs. Derrick, when he was asleep. For having watched himself the greater part of the night, for the pure pleasure of it, Mr. Simlins' late rest had brought him almost to the hour when the boys came to what the doctor called Mr. Linden's levee.

"Well how do you find yourself?" said the farmer, standing at the foot of the bed and looking at its occupant with a kind of grim satisfaction.

"I find myself tired, sir — and at the same time intending to get up. Mr. Simlins, are you going down to church this afternoon?"

"Well, no," said the farmer. "I think it's as good church as I can do, to look arter you."

"You can have both," said Mr. Linden smiling, — "I should go with you."

"You aint fit," said the farmer regretfully.

"Fit enough — I'll come back and stay with you another day, when I am well, if you'll let me."

"Will you?" said the farmer. "I'll bottle that 'ere promise and cork it up; and if it aint good when I pull the cork — then I'll never play Syrian again, for no one. But s'pose I ain't goin' to church?"

"Then I shall have to take Reuben."

"You sha'n't take no one but me," growled Mr. Simlins. "I'd rather see you out of my house than not — if I can't see you in it."

The bells were ringing out for the early afternoon service when they set forth; not ringing against each other, as which should give the loudest call for its own particular church, but with alternate strokes speaking the same thing — the one stepping in when the other was out of breath. The warm sunshine rested upon all — "the evil and the good," and spoke its own message though not so noisily. Along the road Mr. Simlins' little covered wagon (chosen for various reasons) went at an easy pace; with one to drive, and one to bear the motion as best he might; and a third who would almost have agreed to be a pillow or a cushion for the rest of his life, if he could have been one for that day. What there were of that sort in the wagon, or indeed in the house, were to Reuben's eyes far too thin and ineffectual. A little excitement, a very earnest desire to get home once more, did partially supply the need; and by the time the houses were empty and the churches full, the wagon stopped at Mrs. Derrick's gate.

"I guess nobody's home," said Mr. Simlins as he with great tenderness helped Mr. Linden to alight — "but anyway, here's the house all standin'. Reuben, you go ahead and see if we can get in."

But before Reuben touched the door, Mrs. Derrick had opened it from the inside, and stood there — her usually quiet manner quite subdued into silence. Not into inaction however, for her woman's hands soon made their superior powers known, and Mr. Simlins could only wonder why this and that had not occurred to him before. Quick and still and thoughtful, she had done half a dozen little things to make Mr. Linden comfortable before he had been in the house as

many minutes, and assured the two others very confidently that "he shouldn't faint again, if he wanted to ever so much!"

"Well, I was sorry to let him go," said Mr. Simlins, "and now I'm glad of it. It takes a woman! Where's some-somebody else?"

"There's nobody else in the house," said Mrs. Derrick. "Faith's gone to meeting, and Cindy too, for all I know."

"I'll send Dr. Harrison word in the morning where *I* am," said Mr. Linden, — which Mr. Simlins rightly understood to mean that the fact need not be published to-night. He took gentle leave of his lost guest and went to church; excusing himself for it afterwards by saying he felt lonely.

If Faith had seen him there, she might have jumped at conclusions again; but she did not; and after the service walked home, slowly again, though nobody was with her. A little wearied by this time with the night and the day's work, wearied in body and mind perhaps, she paced homewards along the broad street or road, on which the yellow leaves of the trees were floating lazily down, and which was all filled from sky and wayside with golden light. It brought to mind her walk of last Sunday afternoon — and evening; — the hymn, and those other lines Mr. Linden had repeated and which had run in her head fifty times since. And Faith's step grew rather slower and less lightsome as she neared home, and when she got home she went straight up to her room without turning to the right or the left. Her mother was just then in the kitchen and heard her not, and shielded by her bonnet Faith saw not even that Mr. Linden's door stood open; but when she came out again a while after, the full stream of sunlight that came thence into the passage drew her eyes that way. And Faith did not wonder then that her mother had been startled, and unprepared by the doctor's words for the sight of what she now saw. The chintz-covered couch was drawn before the window, in the full radiance of the sunlight, and Mr. Linden lay there looking out; but the sunlight found no glow in his face, unless one as etherial as itself. The habitual sweet pure look was there — a look

that reminded Faith of the one Johnny had worn in the morning; but the face was perfectly colourless. The bandaged arm was supported only by a sling, upon the other hand his cheek rested wearily. Faith looked, hesitated, then stepped lightly into the room and stood before him; with a face not indeed quite so pale as his own, but that only the sunlight hindered his seeing was utterly without its usual colour. She found nothing to say, apparently; for she did not speak, only held out her hand. He had turned at the first sound of her step and watched her — at first smiling, then grave — as she came near; and taking her hand as silently as it was given, Mr. Linden looked up at her face, — perhaps to see whether his instructions had been obeyed.

"I have had men's hands about me so long," he said, "that yours feels like—" he did not specify what, but held it a minute as if he were trying to find out. "Miss Faith, you want to be rocked to sleep."

Could he see that her lips trembled? He could feel how her hand did; but her look was as frank as ever.

"Are you less well to-day?" — she said at last, in a voice that was little above a whisper, and stopped short of his name.

"Less well than yesterday at this time—not less well than this morning. A little more tired, perhaps." He spoke very quietly, answering her words and letting his hand and eye do the rest. "Has Mrs. Derrick a cradle in the house that would hold you?"

Perhaps Faith hardly heard the question, for she did not acknowledge it by so much as a smile. She wished to ask the further question, whether the assurance of last night was still true; but his appearance had driven such fear to her heart that she dared not ask it. She stood quite still a minute, but when she spoke her words were in the utmost clear sweetness of a woman's voice.

"Can I do something for you, Mr. Linden?"

"You are doing something for me now — it is so pleasant to see you. But Miss Faith, I shall have to reclaim some of your scholars; you have been teaching too much to-day."

"No —" she said, — "I have had no chance."

"No chance to teach too much? And why?"

"Why," she said — "I had only the usual hour this morning. I could do no more."

"You look as if you had been teaching all day—or taught, which is but another branch. What did my boys say to you?"

"I think they thought they were saying to you, Mr. Linden, — they behaved so well."

He smiled.

"I don't believe even your conjuring powers could bring about such a hallucination, Miss Faith. — What a day it has been! Look at that sunlight — and think of the city that hath 'no need of the sun'!"

She looked where he bade her, but the contrast was a little too strong just then with the earth that had so much 'need' of it! Only the extreme gravity of her face however indicated anything of the struggle going on. Her eye did not move, — nor eyelid.

"*That* is the only rest we must 'wait for,'" Mr. Linden said. "That 'remaineth.'"

Faith answered nothing. But after a little while the shadow of that sunlight passed away from her face, and she turned to the couch again and asked with her former gentle expression,

"Will you have tea up here, Mr. Linden?"

"I'm afraid I must," he said, looking up at her with eyes that rather questioned than answered.

"Does mother know what you would like to have?"

"Miss Faith — I wish you would tell me just what is troubling you."

The question flushed her a little, and for a moment her face was a quick play of light and shade; then she said,

"It troubled me not to see you looking better."

He took the force of her words, though he answered lightly.

"I suppose I do look rather frightful! But Miss Faith, I hope to get over that in a few days — you must try and brace

up your nerves, because if you cannot bear the sight of me I shall have to deny myself the sight of you."

"Don't do that," she said, the light coming into her eye and voice as if by an actual sunbeam. "Then it is true, what you wrote me last night, Mr. Linden?"

"Well!" he said — "I am not much in the habit of maintaining my own words, — however, in this case I am willing to admit them true. If it will be any relief to your mind, Miss Faith, I will promise to remain in seclusion until you say I am fit to be seen down stairs."

The answer to that was only a rosy little smile, like the sunlight promise of fair weather on the last clouds that float over the horizon. But perhaps his words had brought her mind back to the question of supper, for she asked again,

"What are you to have for tea to-night, Mr. Linden?"

"May I take a great liberty?" he said with a look as grave as before.

"I don't know how you can," — she said and with eyes somewhat surprised, that said in their own way it was impossible.

A little smile — which she scarce saw — came first, and then her hand was brought to his lips. But it was done too gravely and gently to startle even her.

"Now you must go and rest," Mr. Linden said. "I want nothing for tea that shall cost one extra step."

Faith went about as silently and demurely as a cat that has had her ears boxed and been sent out of the dairy. Only in this case she went *to* her dairy; from whence in due time she emerged with cream and butter and made her appearance in the kitchen.

"Well *child!*" said Mrs. Derrick. "When did you get home? and what did you do with yourself? I've looked and looked for you till I was tired, and if you'd staid five minutes more I should have run all over town after you."

"Why mother!" said Faith, "I was in my own room for a good while. I got home in usual time."

"Well!" — said her mother, "I hope next time you'll say

as much — that's all. Do you know we've got company, Faith?"

"Who, mother? — O I've seen Mr. Linden."

"I meant him," said Mrs. Derrick. "I am sure the house seems as if it had twice as many in it since he came."

"He ought to have tea, now, mother. Isn't Cindy home yet?"

"No, but that's no matter — I'll take it up in two minutes. Where's the teapot —"

"I think, mother," said Faith as she was adding the last touches to the tray which was to go up stairs, — "I must have put Mr. Linden in mind of his sister, or somebody, this afternoon. I am afraid he misses them now."

"What do you mean by somebody?" said Mrs. Derrick.

"Some of his own family, I mean. I thought so."

"I don't believe you ever put anybody in mind of anybody else," said Mrs. Derrick confidently. "What made you think so, child?"

"Something made me think so," — said Faith rather abstractly. "Now mother — it is ready, and I'll take it up stairs if you'll take it then."

"I guess I'm up to as much as taking it all the way," said her mother, lifting the tray. "I'll be down presently, dear, — you must want *your* tea." And up stairs she went.

Reuben came to stay all night, so the ladies had only to take their own much needed sleep, in peace; and a note of information was left at Dr. Harrison's door next morning, some time before that gentleman was awake.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I KNOW what I have to do to-day," said Faith the next morning. "Mr. Skip has got the box made, mother, and now I want the stuff to cover it."

"Well that's ready — in my pantry, child."

Whereupon Reuben offered his services; but all that was given him to do was to carry up Mr. Linden's breakfast.

This was hardly well over when Dr. Harrison came. He was shewn into the sitting-room, just as Faith with her arms full of brown moreen came into it also from the pantry. The doctor was not going to lose a shake of the hand, and waited for the brown moreen to be deposited on the floor accordingly.

"You are looking more like yourself to-day," he said.

"I will call mother," said Faith. Which she did, leaving the doctor in company with the brown moreen.

"Mrs. Derrick," said he, speaking by no means without a purpose, "I have cause of complaint against you! What have you done to allure my patient down here against orders?"

"He's better here," said Mrs. Derrick with a cool disposing of the subject. "What did you want to keep him up there for, doctor?"

"Only acted upon a vigorous principle of Mr. Linden's nature, madam. — If I had ordered him to come, he would have stayed. May I see him?"

And Mrs. Derrick preceded the doctor up stairs, opened the door of the room and shut it after him. Mr. Linden was on the couch, but it was wheeled round by the side of the fire now, for the morning was cool. A little heap of unopened letters and post despatches lay before him, but the white paper in his hand seemed not to have come from the heap. As the doctor entered, this was folded up and transferred to the disabled hand for safe keeping.

Mr. Linden had that quality (much more common among women than among men) of looking well in undress; but let no one suppose that I mean the combination of carelessness and disorder which generally goes by that name, and which shews (most of all) undress of the mind. I mean simply that style of dress which Sam Weller might call 'Ease afore Ceremony;' — in its delicate particularity, Mr. Linden's undress might have graced a ball-room; and, as I have said, the dark brown wrapper with its wide sleeves was becoming. Dr. Harrison might easily see that his patient was not only different

from most of the neighbourhood, but also from most people that he had seen anywhere; and that peculiar reposeful look was strongly indicative of power.

"Good morning!" said the doctor. "Do you expect me to behave well this morning?"

"Why no —" said Mr. Linden. "My experience hitherto has not led me to expect anything of the sort."

The doctor stood before the fire, looking down at him, smiling almost, yet with a keen eye, as at a man whose measure he had not yet succeeded in taking.

"What did you come down here for, without my leave? And how do you do? For you see, I mean to behave well."

"I came down because I wanted to be at home," said Mr. Linden. "And I did not ask leave, because I meant to come whether or no. You see what a respect I have for your orders."

"Yes," said the doctor, — "that is a very ancient sort of respect. How do you do, Linden?"

"I suppose, well, — as to feeling, I should not care to go through the Olympic games, even in imagination; and the various sensations in my left arm make me occasionally wish they were in my right."

The doctor proceeded to an examination of the arm. It was found not to be taking the road to healing so readily as had been hoped.

"I am afraid it may be a somewhat tedious affair," said Dr. Harrison, as he renewed the bandages in the way they ought to be. "I wish I had hold of that fellow! This may take a little time to come to a harmonious disposition, Linden, and give you a little annoyance. And at the same time, it's what you deserve!" said he, retaking his disengaged manner as he finished what he had to do. "I almost wish I could threaten you with a fever, or something serious; but I see you are as sound as that 'axletree' our friend spoke of the other day. There it is! You have learned to do evil with impunity. For I confess this has nothing to do with the exercise of your

lawless disposition yesterday. Why didn't you let me bring you, if you wanted to come? That old fellow can't have anything drawn by horses, that goes easier than a harrow!"

"Let you bring me!" said Mr. Linden. "Would you have done it against your own orders?"

"Under your authority! which is equal to anything, you know."

"Well," said Mr. Linden, "will you take a seat under my authority, and then take the benefit of my fire? What is going on in the outer world?"

"I haven't any idea!" said the doctor. "Pattaquasset seems to me to be, socially, at one extreme pole of the axletree before-mentioned, and while I am here I feel no revolution of the great mass heaving beyond. It takes away one's breath, does Pattaquasset."

"You are making it akin to 'the music of the spheres,'" said Mr. Linden.

"Is that what you find in Pattaquasset?" said the doctor. "Your ears must be pleasantly constituted — or more agreeably saluted than those of other mortals. The only music I know of here is Miss Derrick's voice. Does she feed upon roses, like the Persian bulbul?"

"I should suppose not — unless roses impart their colour in that way," said Mr. Linden, softly turning the folded paper from side to side.

"This is a nice place," said the doctor surveying the room — "and you look very comfortable. I should like to take your invitation and sit down — but I mustn't. Won't you try and put a good opinion of me into the head of Mrs. Derrick?"

"What an extraordinary request!" said Mr. Linden, laughing a little. "Pray what am I to understand by it? And why mustn't you sit down? — here is something to rejoice your heart with a few of the aforesaid upheavings of Society;" and he handed the doctor an unopened foreign newspaper.

"Absolutely irresistible!" said the doctor, and he broke the cover, took a chair and sat down before the fire; where

for awhile to all appearance he also made himself 'comfortable'; and certainly turned and returned and ran over the paper in an artistic manner.

"After all," said he, "it's a bore! this alternation of knocking each other down which the nations of the earth practise, — and the societies, — and the men! It's a pugilistic world we live in, Linden. It's a bore to keep up with them, — for one must know who's atop — both in Europe and in Pattaquasset — where you are just now the king of men's mouths — And all the while it don't a pin signify, except to the one who *is* atop; — I beg your pardon!"

"How long must I, being 'atop,' lie here? All this week?"

"What will you do if I say more than that?"

"Why I'll listen respectfully. Do you know I like to see you sitting there? — Here is another paper for you."

The doctor looked at him with an odd, frankly inquisitive smile; but he only took the paper to play with it.

"I wonder if I may ask a roundabout favour from you?"

"You may ask anything —" said Mr. Linden. "I would rather have it in a straight-forward form."

"Can't," said the doctor, "because it is crooked. I suppose at this hour every lady in Pattaquasset expects that her friends will not call her away from her affairs; and I stupidly forgot to deliver my message when I had a moment's chance this morning. Now as it is possible you may see this — if she cannot be called the silver-footed Thetis, she is certainly the silver-tongued — you would know how to address her?"

"Thetis! — probably, when I see her."

"I may presume you will know her when you see her, — and that brings me to my point. I have got some good microscopic preparations — which I am to have the pleasure of exhibiting to-night to some friends of my sister. Now it would greatly add to her pleasure and mine, if this mortal Polyhymnia will consent to be of the number — and this is what I was going to ask you, if you please, to communicate to

her or to her mother, in whose good graces, as I told you," said the doctor with a funny smile, "I don't think I have the honour to stand high. Sophy would have written this morning, but I gave her no chance. I will call for Miss Derrick this evening if she will allow me."

Mr. Linden took out his pencil and made a note of the facts.

"First," he said, "I am to communicate, then you are to call, after that to exhibit. Do you call that crooked? — why it's as straight as the road from here to your house."

Dr. Harrison looked — and for a minute did not anything else.

"For your arm, Linden," he said then getting up from his chair, and a smile of doubtful comicality moving his lip a little — "we shall know better about it in two or three weeks; but certainly I think you must be content to stay at home for double those — that's undoubted."

Mr. Linden gave the doctor a quick glance, but the smile which followed was 'undoubted' in another way.

"When two opposing forces meet at right angles, doctor," he said, "you know what happens to the object. Not contented inertia."

"Contented! no, very likely, — not when it is *this* object. But you will find a third force will establish the inertia."

"What is your third force?"

"The necessity of the case," said the doctor seriously.

But to that Mr. Linden made no reply. The conversation had been kept up not only against weakness but against pain, and he lay very still and colourless for a long time after the doctor closed the door.

Meanwhile Faith, busy at her brown moreen, made her mother's job of mending seem like embroidery; but by degrees Mrs. Derrick's face became thoughtful, and she said, rather emphatically,

"Child, have you been up to see Mr. Linden to-day?"

Faith's hammer dropped, and her hands too.

"No, mother," she said, looking at her.

"Why child!" — Mrs. Derrick began, — then she stopped and began again. "I guess he'd rather see you than that box, child, — if the doctor hasn't talked him to death."

"Mother, do you think he would like to have me come up and see him?"

"Like it?" said Mrs. Derrick, her mind almost refusing to consider such an absurd question. "I'm sure he likes to see you when he's well, Faith. Didn't he like it last night?"

Faith looked a little bit grave, then she hastily pushed her brown moreen and box into a somewhat more orderly state of disorganization, and went up stairs, with a quick light step that was not heard before her tap at Mr. Linden's door. And then receiving permission she went in, a little rosy this time at venturing into the charmed region when its occupant was there; and came with her step a little lighter, a little slower, up to the side of the couch and held out her hand; saying her soft "How do you do, Mr. Linden?"

He was lying just as the doctor had left him, with the unopened letters, and the white paper which Faith felt instinctively was her own exercise. But eye and hand were ready for her.

"Courageous Miss Faith!" he said with a smile. "And so, 'She's gentle and not fearful'?"

She smiled, with an eye that took wistful note of him.

"How do you feel to-day, Mr. Linden?"

"Not very well — and not worse. Miss Faith, do you know that we have a great deal to do this week? You may lock up your stocking basket."

"Please let me do something for you, Mr. Linden?" she said earnestly.

"That's just what I'm talking about. Do you think, Miss Faith, that if you brought that low chair here, and set the door wide open so that you could run out if you got frightened at my grim appearance, you would be willing to philosophize a little?"

"Not to-day, Mr. Linden," said Faith. "Don't speak so!

I haven't any stocking basket in the way. Can't I do *something* that would do you some good?"

"It would do me a great deal of good to get up and set that chair for you, but that is something I must ask you to do for me. I see you want coaxing" — he added, looking at her. "Well — if you will do half a dozen things for me this morning, you shall have the reward of a letter and two messages."

Faith looked down doubtful, — doubtful, whether to do what would please herself, and him, would be just right today; but the pleading of the affirmative side of the question was too strong. She gave up considering the prudential side of the measure, thinking that perhaps Mr. Linden knew his own feelings best; and once decided, let pleasure have its full flow. With hardly a shade upon the glad readiness of her movements, she placed the chair and brought the book, and sat docile down, though keeping a jealous watch for any sign of pain or weariness that should warn her to stop. And from one thing to another he led her on, talking less than usual, perhaps, himself, but giving her none the less good a lesson. And the signs she sought for could not be found. Weary he was not, mentally, and physical nature knew its place. Last of all, the little exercise was opened and commented upon and praised — and she praised through it, though very delicately.

"Have I tired you?" he said, as the town clock struck an hour past the mid-day.

"Oh no! — And you, Mr. Linden?"

In what a different tone the two parts of her speech were spoken.

"I have not hurt myself," he said smiling. "Perhaps by and by, this afternoon, you will let me see you again. Dr. Harrison threatens to keep me at home for two or three weeks, and I want to make the most of them, — I may not have such a time of leisure again." And then Mr. Linden gave the doctor's message — a message, very strictly, and as near as possible in the doctor's own words, receiving as

little tinge as it well could from the medium through which it passed.

"The other message," he said, giving her a letter, "you will find there."

"A message?" — said Faith doubtfully and flushing with pleasure — "isn't this one of your sister's letters?"

"Yes. Mayn't she send you a message?"

A very modest and very happy smile and deepening blush answered that; and she ran away with a sudden compunctious remembrance of Mr. Linden's dinner.

After dinner Faith had something to do in the kitchen, and something to do in other parts of the house, and then she would have read the letter before all things else; but then came in a string of company — one after the other, everybody wanting the news and much more than could be given. So it was a succession of flourishing expectations cut down and blasted; and both Faith and her mother grew tired of the exercise of cutting down and blasting, and Faith remembered with dismay that the afternoon was wearing and Mr. Linden had wished to see her again. She seized her chance and escaped at last, between the adieu of one lady and the accost of another who was even then coming up from the gate, and knocked at Mr. Linden's door again just as Mrs. Derrick was taking her minister's wife into the parlour. Her first move this time on coming in, was to brush up the hearth and put the fire in proper order for burning well; then she faced round before the couch and stood in a sort of pleasant expectation, as waiting for orders.

"You are a bright little visiter!" Mr. Linden said, holding out his hand to her. "You float in as softly and alight as gently as one of these crimson leaves through my window. Did anybody ever tell you the real reason why women are like angels?"

"I didn't know they were," said Faith laughing, and with something more of approximation to a crimson leaf.

"'They are all ministering spirits,'" he said looking at her. "But you must be content with that, Miss Faith, and

not make your visits angelic in any other sense. What do you suppose I have been considering this afternoon? — while you have been spoiling the last Pattaquasset story by confessing that I am alive?"

"Did you hear them coming in?" said Faith. "I didn't know when they were going to let me get away. — What have you been considering, Mr. Linden?"

"The wide-spread presence and work of beauty. You see what a shock you gave my nervous system yesterday. Will you please to sit down, Miss Faith?"

Faith sat down, clearly in a puzzle; from which she expected to be somehow fetched out.

"What do you suppose is beauty's work in the world? — I don't mean any particular Beauty."

Faith looked at the crimson leaves on the floor — for the window was open though the fire was burning; then at the fair sky outside, seen beyond and through some other crimson leaves yet hanging on the large maple there, — then coming back to the face before her, she smiled and said,

"I don't know — except to make people happy, Mr. Linden."

"That is one part of its use, certainly. But take the thousands of wilderness flowers, and the thousands of deep sea shells; look at the carvings on the scale of a fish, which no human eye can see without a glass, or those other exquisite patterns traced upon the roots and stems of some of the fossil pines, which were hid in the solid rock before there was a human eye to see. What is *their* use?"

To the wilderness and to the deep sea, Faith's thought and almost her eye went, and she took some time to consider the subject.

"I suppose —" she said thoughtfully — "I don't know, Mr. Linden."

"Did you ever consider those words which close the account of the Creation — 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good'."

"That is what I was going to say!" she said modestly

but with brightening colour, — "that perhaps he made all those things, those you spoke of, for *himself?*"

"For himself — to satisfy the perfectness of his own character. And think how different the divine and the human standards of perfection! Not the outward fair colour and proportion merely, not the perfect fitness and adaptation, not the most utilitarian employment of every grain of dust, so that nothing is lost, — not even the grandest scale of working, is enough; but the dust on the moth's wing must be plumage, and the white chalk cliffs must be made of minute shells, each one of which shines like spun silver or is figured like cut glass. Not more steadily do astronomers discover new worlds, than the microscope reveals some new perfection of detail and finish in our own."

Faith listened, during this speech, like one literally seeing 'into space,' as far as an embodied spirit can, for the first time. Then with a smile, a little sorrowful, she brought up with,

"I don't know anything of all that, Mr. Linden! Do you mean that chalk is really made of little shells?"

"Yes, really — and blue mould is like a miniature forest. You will know about it" — he said with a smile. "But do you see how this touches the standard of moral perfection? — how it explains that other word, 'Be ye also perfect'."

Faith had not seen before, but she did now; for in her face the answer flashed most eloquently. She was silent.

"That is the sort of perfection we are promised," Mr. Linden went on presently, — "that is the sort of perfection we shall see. Now, both glass and eye are imperfect, — specked, and flawed, and short-sighted; and can but faintly discern 'the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge.' But then! —

'When sin no more obstructs our sight,
When sorrow pains our hearts no more,
How shall we view the Prince of Light,
And all his works of grace explore!
What heights and depths of love divine
Will then through endless ages shine!'"

The words moved her probably, for she sat with her face turned a little away so that its play or its gravity were scarce so well revealed. Not very long however. The silence lasted time enough to let her thoughts come back to the subject never very far from them.

"You are tired, Mr. Linden."

"By what chain of reasoning, Miss Faith?"

"I know by the sound of your voice. And you eat nothing to-day. Do you like cocoa, Mr. Linden?" she added eagerly.

He smiled a little and answered yes.

"Then I shall bring you some!"

Faith stayed for no answer to that remark, but ran off. Half an hour good had passed away, but very few minutes more, when her soft tap was heard at the door again and herself entered, accompanied with the cup of cocoa and a plate of dainty tiny strips of toast.

"Aunt Dilly left some here," she said as she presented the cup, — "and *she* says it is good; and she shewed me how to make it. Aunt Dilly has lived all her life with a brother who has lived a great part of *his* life with a French wife — so Aunt Dilly has learned some of her ways — and this is one of them."

But Mr. Linden looked as if he thought 'the way' belonged emphatically to somebody else.

"And so I am under the rule of the blue ribbands still!" he said as he raised himself up to do honour to the cup of cocoa. "Miss Faith, do you know you are subjecting yourself to the penalty of extra lessons?"

"How, Mr. Linden?"

"Don't you know that is one of the punishments for bad conduct? It's a great act of insubordination to bring me cocoa without leave."

She laughed, and then paid her attentions to the fire again; after which she stood by the hearth to see the cocoa disposed of, till she came to take the cup.

"Are you in pain, much, Mr. Linden?" she asked as she did this.

"Not mental —" he said with a smile; "and the physical can be borne. Miss Faith, that cocoa was certainly better than I ever had from the hands of anybody's French wife. You must have improved upon the receipt."

"When Dr. Harrison comes for me this evening, shall he come up and see you again?"

"If he wishes — there is no need else."

"How did it happen, Mr. Linden?" she said with a very serious face.

"On this wise, Miss Faith. I, walking home at a rather quick pace, was suddenly 'brought to' as the sailors say, by this shot in my arm. But as for the moment it affected the mind more than the body, I turned and gave chase, — wishing to enquire who had thus favoured me, and why. But the mind alone can only carry one a certain distance, and before I had caught my man I found myself in such danger of fainting that I turned about again, and made the best of my way to the house of Mr. Simlins. The rest you know."

"What did the man run for?"

"There is no thread in my nature that just answers that question," said Mr. Linden. "I *suppose* he ran because he was frightened."

"But what should have frightened him?"

"The idea of my displeasure probably," said Mr. Linden smiling. "Have you forgotten my character for cruelty, Miss Faith?"

"*But* —" said Faith. "Why should he think he had displeased you? He wasn't near you, was he?"

"Why I am not supposed to be one of those amiable people who like to be shot," said Mr. Linden in the same tone.

"But how near was he, Mr. Linden?"

"Within gunshot range, of course — the precise distance is not easily measured at such a moment."

"But if he was not near," said Faith, "how could he think that his shot had touched you? He couldn't see it — and your running wouldn't seem like a man seriously injured?"

"He might think I disapproved of discharging a gun at random, in the public road."

"You don't suppose it could have been done on purpose, Mr. Linden!" she said in a changed awe-stricken tone.

"I have no right to assume anything of the kind — there are all sorts of so-called accidents. But Miss Faith! if you look so frightened I shall begin to think you are an accomplice! What do *you* know about it?" he added smiling.

"Nothing —" she said rather sadly, "except a little look of something, I don't know what, in your face when you said that, Mr. Linden."

"You must not look grave — nor think twice about the matter in any way," he said with a sort of kind gravity that met hers. "Is there light enough for you to read that first chapter of Physical Geography, and talk to me about it? — it is your turn to talk now."

"Do you mean, aloud? — or to myself, Mr. Linden?" she asked a little timidly.

"I mean, to me."

Faith did not object, though her colour rose very visibly. She placed herself to catch the fading light, and read on, talking where it was absolutely necessary, but sparing and placing her questions so as to call forth as few words as possible in reply. And becoming engaged in the interest of the matter she almost forgot her timidity; — not quite, for every now and then something made it rise to the surface. The daylight was fading fast, sunlight had already gone, and the wood fire began to throw its red gleams unchecked; flashing fitfully into the corners of the room and playing hide and seek with the shadows. A little rising of the wind and light flutter of the leaves against the glass, only made the warm room more cheerful. Faith made the fire burn brightly, and finished the chapter by that, with the glow of the flickering flame dancing all over her and her book in the corner where she sat. But pages of pleasure as well as of prettiness, all those pages were.

"Thank you, Miss Faith," Mr. Linden said as she closed

the book. "I only wish I could give you a walk now in this bright evening air; but I must wait for that."

A little tap at the door came at this point to take its place in the conversation. It was Mrs. Derrick.

"Child," said the good lady, "here's Dr. Harrison down stairs." And stepping into the room, Mrs. Derrick walked softly up to the couch, and not only made enquiries but felt of Mr. Linden's hand to see if he had any fever. Faith waited, standing a little behind the couch head.

"I'm not quite sure —" she said, — "your hand's a little warm, sir — but then it's apt to be towards night, — and maybe mine's a little cool. If you could only go to sleep, it would do you so much good!"

And Mr. Linden laughingly promised to try, but would not guarantee the success thereof.

Faith went down stairs, a little afraid that she had been doing harm instead of good, and at the same time not seeing very well how she could have helped it. She found Dr. Harrison in the sitting-room, and gave her quiet reasons for not going out with him. The doctor declared "he should be in despair — but that he had hope!" and having made Faith confess that she would like to see his microscope, gently suggested the claims of the next two evenings; saying that he must be in Quilipeak for a day or two soon himself, and therefore was not impatient without reason. Faith did not know how to get off, and gave the doctor to understand that she might be disengaged the next night. Having which comfort he went up to see Mr. Linden. Then followed Mr. Linden's tea, with cresses and grapes which Dr. Harrison had brought himself.

"Mother," said Faith, when the two ladies were seated at their own tea-table, — "did Dr. Harrison dress Mr. Linden's arm again to-night?"

"Yes child — and I guess it was good he did. I think Mr. Linden was almost asleep when I went up."

"Do you know how to do it, mother? if it was wanted when the doctor is not here?"

"I don't know —" said Mrs. Derrick thoughtfully, — "no,

child, I *don't* know how — at least not so I'd like to try. Do you, Faith?"

"No, mother — but could you learn?"

"Why — I suppose I could, child," said her mother, as if she disliked to admit even so much. "But I'd about as lieve have my own arm shot off — I'm so dreadfully afraid of hurting people, Faith — and I always was afraid of *him*. Why can't the doctor do it? he can come six times a day if he's wanted — I guess he don't do much else."

Faith said no more on the subject, but hurried through her tea and sat down by the lamp in the sitting-room to read her letter. A minute or two she sat thinking, deeply, with her cheek on her hand; then dismissing everything else she opened the precious paper at last.

It was another Italy letter, but took her a very different journey from the last. A little graver perhaps than that, a little more longing in the wish to use eyesight instead of pen and ink; and as if absence was telling more and more upon the writer. Yet all this was rather in the tone than the wording — *that* was kept in hand. But it was midway in some bright description, that the message to Faith broke forth.

"Tell Miss Faith," she said, "that I would rather have seen her roasting clams down at 'the shore,' than anything I have seen since I heard of it, — which is none the less true, that I should have wanted to stand both sides of the window at once. And tell her if you can (though I don't believe even *you* can, John Endy) how much I love her for taking such care of one of my precious things. I feel as if all my love was very powerless just now! However — you remember that comforting old ballad —

'Where there is no space
For the glow-worm to lye;
Where there is no space
For receipt of a fly;
Where the midge dares not venture,
Lest herself fast she lay;
If love come he will enter,
And soon find out his way!'

"So, Miss Faith, you may expect to see me appear some time in the shape of a midge! — Endecott will tell you I am not much better than that now."

So far Faith got in reading the letter, and it was a long while before she got any further; that message to herself she went over again and again. It was incomprehensible, it was like one of Mr. Linden's own puzzles for that. It was so strange, and at the same time it was such a beautiful thing, that Mr. Linden's sister should have heard of *her* and in such fashion as to make her wish to send a message! Faith's head stooped lower and lower over the paper, from her mother and the lamp. It was such a beautiful message too — the gracious and graceful wording of it Faith felt in every syllable; and the lines of the old ballad were some of the prettiest she had ever seen. But that Faith should have *love* sent her from Italy — and from that person in Italy of all others! — that Mr. Linden's sister should wish to see *her* and threaten to do it in the shape of a midge! — and what ever *could* Mr. Linden have told her to excite the wish? And what of this lady's precious things had Faith taken care of? — 'such care' of! "Mother!" — Faith began once by way of taking counsel, but thought better of it, and went on pondering by herself. One thing was undoubted — this message in this letter was a matter of great pleasure and honour! as Faith felt in the bottom of her heart; but in the midst of it all, she hardly knew whence, came a little twinge of something like pain. She felt it — yes, she felt it, even in the midst of the message; but if Faith herself could not trace it out, of course it can be expected of nobody else.

CHAPTER XXII.

Phil Davids, taking his morning walk through the pleasant roads of Pattaquasset, engaged in his out-of-school amusements of hunting cats and frightening children, was suddenly arrested in the midst of an alarming face ('got up' for the benefit of Robbie Waters) by the approach of Sam Stoutenburgh. In general this young gentleman let Phil alone,

'severely,' but on the present occcasion he stopped and laid hold of his shoulder.

"Phil Davids! I've a warrant against you."

"Hands off, Sam! and let a man alone, will you! What do you mean by that?" said Phil gruffly.

"Yes — I'll let him alone — when I find him, if he's like you," said Sam with great coolness and some little contempt. "But if you're tired of your own face, Phil, why don't you make up a handsome one, while you're about it? Keep out of his way, Robbie! can't you?"

"Guess you don't know what folks says o' yourn! Do you?" said Phil, wriggling his shoulder from under Sam's hand. "*I* do!"

"I guess I know as much as is good for me," replied the undaunted Sam. "But that's none of your business just now. Mr. Linden wants to see you, Phil — and it aint often anybody does that, so you'd better make the most of the chance." With which pleasing sentiment, Sam released Phil, and taking a sharp run after Robbie. Waters enticed him into a long confidential conversation about his new Sunday school teacher. In the midst of which Phil's voice came again.

"'Twon't hurt you Sam — jest listen once. They say, Sam Stoutenburgh would have been a Lady apple, if he hadn't grown to be such a Swar, and all the while *he* thinks he's a Seek-no-further. That's what folks says. How d'ye like it?"

"Firstrate!" said Sam — "glad I missed the Lady apples, anyhow, — and as for 'tother, never thought myself one yet — don't like 'em well enough. When you get through paying me compliments, Phil Davids, you'd better go and see Mr. Linden."

"Guess I will!" said Phil swaggering off, — "when I want to see *him;* and that aint to-day, by a long jump."

"He said you were to come —" Sam called after him. "If I wasn't a Stoutenburgh sweeting, Phil Davids, I'd teach you to talk of him so! If I only was! —" Sam added sotto voce, "wouldn't I pack myself up in a basket! Robbie,

what sort of flowers did Miss Faith have in her bonnet?" At which interesting point the two turned a corner out of Phil's sight.

But Phil pursued his way; decently regardless of threats or invitations, and having a wholesome opinion of his own that in holiday time Mr. Linden had nothing to say to him. In no possible time had he anything to say to Mr. Linden that he could help. So it happened, that coming in soon after Mr. Linden had dismissed his breakfast, Faith found Mr. Linden alone. She brought to his side a basket of very fine-looking pears.

"Mr. David has sent you these, Mr. Linden."

"He is very kind," said Mr. Linden. "That is more than I asked for. He hasn't sent Phil in the basket too, has he? — as the easiest way of getting him here."

Faith rather startled, and passing over that asked Mr. Linden how he did. Which point, having learned all he wanted upon the other, Mr. Linden was also ready for. Faith then leaving the basket by the couch side, went to the fire and hearth, and put them more thoroughly to rights than Cindy's delicacy of touch, or of eye, had enabled her to do; and going on round the room, carefully performed the same service for everything in it generally. This work however was suddenly stopped in the midst, and coming to the head of the couch, rather behind Mr. Linden, Faith spoke in a low and ill-assured tone.

"Mr. Linden — will you let me be by this morning when Dr. Harrison dresses your arm?"

There was a moment's silence, and then raising himself up and turning a little so as to see her, Mr. Linden answered, gravely though smiling,

"No, Miss Faith!"

She coloured very much and drew back.

"I asked —" she said presently, speaking with a good deal of difficulty, — "because he spoke of being away — and then there would be no one to do it — and mother is afraid —"

And there Faith stopped, more abashed than anybody had

ever seen her in her life before. He held out his hand, and took hers, and held it fast.

"I know —" he said, — "you need not tell me. When is the doctor going away?"

"I don't know," she said almost under breath — "he said perhaps — or I thought — I understood him to mean in a few days."

"Miss Faith!" — and the tone was half expostulating, half scolding, half caressing. "Come here and sit down by me," he said, gently drawing her round to the low chair at his side, "I want to talk to you. Do you need to be told why I said no?"

She sat down, but sunk her head a little and put up her other hand to shield the side of her face which was next him. The answer did not come at once — when it did, it was a low spoken "no." Her hand was held closer, but except that and the moved change of his voice, Mr. Linden took no notice of her fear.

"I would not let Pet do it —" he said gently, "if I could help it. My child, do you know what a disagreeable business it is? I could trust you for not fainting at the time, but I should ill like to hear of your fainting afterwards. And then if you chanced to hurt me — which the doctor often does — you would be unhappy for the rest of the day, — which the doctor by no means is. That is all — I would a great deal rather have your hands about me than his, but a thing that would give you pain would give me very doubtful relief. I had rather go with my arm undressed."

He had gone on talking — partly to give her time to recover; but the silent look that was bent upon that shielded face was a little anxious.

She dropped the hand that shielded it presently, and shewed it flushed and wistful, yet with a tiny bit of smile beginning to work at the corners of the mouth.

"Then Mr. Linden," she said almost in the same tone and without turning her face, — "if you have no *other* objection — please let me come!"

"But that one is strong enough. You may send Cinderella up to take a lesson."

"You said that was all?" she repeated.

"That is the only real objection — I would not raise even that in a case of greater need. But I suppose unskilful hands could hardly do me much mischief now. So if you will send Cinderella," he added with a smile, "she may enlarge her world of ideas a little."

"Mr. Linden," — said Faith looking at him now fearlessly — "I am going to come myself."

"You are!" he said, looking at her — and then his eyes went from her to the fire, and back again to her face. "Then if you faint away, Miss Faith, and I jump up to take care of you (which I shall certainly do) I may faint myself — at which stage of the proceedings Dr. Harrison will have his hands full."

"I shall not faint — before nor after," she said, shaking her head.

"I should not like to count too much upon your unfeeling disposition," said Mr. Linden, in whose face different currents of thought seemed to meet and mingle. "And then you see, my senses may be guilty of as great a breach of politeness as the warder in a German story I was reading yesterday."

"What was that?"

"It fell out," said Mr. Linden, "that a lady of surpassing beauty arrived at a certain castle: and next day, the lord of the castle brought before her his warder, bound in chains for a great breach of politeness; he having failed to give his lord notice of the lady's approach! The warder thus defended himself: he had indeed seen the lady, but his dazzled eyes mistook her for another sun! So," added Mr. Linden smiling, "if my eyes should mistake you for a sunbeam or a maple leaf, I might forget myself, and not keep my patience so perfectly as I ought under the hands of such a chirurgeon."

"What is going to try your patience, Mr. Linden? — I?" — said Faith, now indubitably in a puzzle.

"Do you really want to do this for me?" he said in a dif-

ferent tone, looking at her with that same grave, kind look which she had seen before.

"I think I can — and I should like to do it, Mr. Linden, if you are perfectly willing," Faith answered.

"I am willing, since you wish it, — and now you must get the doctor's leave — or rather I must get it for you; but in the mean time, Miss Faith, we may go on with some of our studies, if you are at leisure."

Faith went to get the books, but returned without them and with a disturbed face.

"Mr. Linden, one of the boys wishes to see you."

"I suppose it never was heard that a boy came at the right time," said Mr. Linden. "Well Miss Faith — I believe I must see him — will you write another exercise for me? Here is your pen and paper — I will try not to be hindered long."

Faith mutely took the pen and paper, and went out with a divided mind, for the boy whom she let in, Cindy being nowhere visible, was Phil Davids. Phil had thought better of his determination, and wisely judging that if Mr. Linden wanted to see him he probably would accomplish the measure some time, concluded the shortest way was to see him as smoothly as possible. So in he walked and made his bow, grumly civil, but civil.

Mr. Linden's opening remark, after he had given the boy his hand (which even he liked to touch) was at least peculiar.

"Phil — do you know what a smart boy you are?"

And the answer was a strictly true, though blundering, "No, sir."

"I don't know *how* smart you could be, myself," said Mr. Linden, "but I know you are very smart now. You always make me think of the man who found a bag of jewels lying in the road and didn't know what they were."

It occurred to Phil's mind that not to know jewels when they were seen was a doubtful proof of smartness; so he answered with a somewhat surly, "How, sir?"

"This man," Mr. Linden went on, "instead of having his jewels set in gold, to wear or to sell, went round the town

flinging them at his neighbour's windows — or his neighbour's cats, — as you do, Phil, with your very bright powers of head and tongue. Why don't you make a man of yourself — and use those powers for something worth while?"

"You never see me doin' it, sir!" said Phil, answering the most interesting part of Mr. Linden's address.

"Don't I?" said Mr. Linden, — "I see and hear a good many things. But nobody can get on in the world after such a prickly fashion, — why even a porcupine smooths himself down before he tries to go ahead. If you were to be a lawyer Phil, you'd fight your clients instead of helping them fight, — and if you were a farmer, you'd be like the man who burnt up three stacks of his hay because the fourth got wet."

Phil reddened, though he couldn't help smiling, and was evidently getting angry.

"That 'ere farmer was a big fool!" he said.

"Yes, we are agreed upon that point," said Mr. Linden, — "I daresay he would have said so himself next day. Well Phil — this was not what I wanted to talk to you about do-day — much as I like to see smart boys make the most of themselves. I want to know exactly what it was that you heard Reuben Taylor say about Miss Derrick."

Phil's eyes opened unmistakeably.

"I never heerd him say nothing about her!" he said boldly.

"Then why did you say you did?" said Mr. Linden, with the cool face of one who knows his ground.

"I didn't!" said Phil. "I'm blessed if I did."

"No you are not —" said Mr. Linden gravely, — "people are never blessed who do not speak truth. And you have shut both doors by which such a blessing might have come in this case, Phil."

"Who said I ever said so, sir?" Phil asked confidently.

"You told Dr. Harrison, for one," said Mr. Linden.

"I never spoke a word to Dr. Harrison —" Phil began and checked himself. "I never said anything but the truth, sir!"

"What truth did you say to him?" said Mr. Linden. "I

wish you would do the same for me. The roughest truth, Phil, is pleasanter to my ears than the smoothest falsehood."

"I said nothin' but what *was* truth, sir," said Phil, perplexedly, as if he felt caught in a snare. "I didn't think you meant *that*."

"That is precisely what I meant."

"'Twarn't nothing but the truth, sir."

"Well —" said Mr. Linden, — "I never was afraid of the truth yet, and I don't mean to begin now. You didn't say I had cut your ears off, did you Phil?"

"I didn't say nothin' about you, sir, good or indifferent."

"That's something," said Mr. Linden with unmoved gravity. "What else did you say?"

"It was down to Neanticut, sir," said Phil — "I told Reuben Taylor as how he'd druv her down, Joe Deacon said he had; and Reuben said Joe had made a mistake. That's the hull of it, sir."

"Who is *her?*" said Mr. Linden.

"She — Miss Faith Derrick, sir."

Phil was getting very uncomfortably red in the face.

"Well why did you tell Miss Derrick that Reuben didn't drive her down? — would not she have been likely to know."

"I didn't, sir."

"I thought not. What *did* you tell her?"

"She knows what I told her!" — said Phil, looking abstractedly at the corner of the couch on which Mr. Linden lay. — "I don't know as I can recollect. But that's what Reuben said, sir."

"Well tell me as near as you can recollect —" said Mr. Linden. "And also just the words you used to Reuben."

Phil took time to reflect.

"I don't want ter," he said.

"No, I see you don't — but I want to hear them," said Mr. Linden very quietly. "But tell me the truth *this* time, Phil."

"Folks has a right to speak," said Phil, stating a broad proposition, — "but they hain't a right to tell all they say!"

"Well?" — said Mr. Linden, waiving that.

"'Twarn't nothin'!" said Phil — "and it 'll just make folks mad — and I durstn't —"

"Dare not repeat what you have dared to say? how is that, Phil? But my forgiveness always meets confession half way, as you know," said Mr. Linden.

"Well," said Phil, "I jest told Reuben he'd druv her down, and Reuben said Joe was mistaken. It was Joe said it first."

"And what did you say before Dr. Harrison?"

"I said what Reuben said," — said Phil feeling poorly.

"And what was that?" — Mr. Linden was as untireable as a minority juror.

"I said Reuben said she warn't what Joe said," Phil got out at last in a lowered tone.

"And what was *that?*"

"Well —" said Phil desperately — "Joe said she was —"

Mr. Linden waited. So did Phil.

"This is the house that Jack built," Mr. Linden remarked. "What did Joe say she was?"

The answer came in articulation pretty well smothered up.

"Joe said she was Mr. Linden's sweetheart."

"O! —" said Mr. Linden, with a tone Phil felt to the tips of his ears, — "that was it! I really did not know, Phil, that you and Joe took an interest in such matters. Have you had much experience?"

Phil shuffled and looked exceedingly embarrassed, but words found none. He had exhausted his stock, of more than words.

"Well!" said Mr. Linden, — "you will find, Phil, that it is generally safe to study arithmetic before you begin algebra. There's a little mistake here. Reuben did not drive *anybody* down to Neanticut — Mrs. Derrick drove the whole way. That explains his words. As for yours, Phil — I wish," said Mr. Linden, looking at him gravely, but gently too, "I wish I knew something you would like very much to have. Can you tell me?"

If ever in his life Phil Davids mentally stared, (physically, too) he did it now. 'Something he would like very much to have'? What could Mr. Linden want to know *that* for? In his confusion Phil didn't know himself. To take in Mr. Linden, all over, was all he was competent to.

"Well?" said his teacher with a smile — it was rather a faint one, for he was tired, but very pleasant still. "What is there, Phil? — I am in earnest."

"I'm sorry I said it, anyhow!" burst at last from the boy's reluctant lips. That seemed to be his ultimatum. He could see that his words gave pleasure, though they were not directly answered.

"I must send you away now," Mr. Linden said, taking his hand again. "I am not strong enough to talk any more. But Phil — if you will learn to speak the truth — so that at the end of six months you can truly say, 'I hate every false way' — I will give you then what you like, — you shall choose your own reward. I would give anything I have in the world if I could make you fear to displease God by telling a falsehood, as much as you fear to displease me by owning it!"

It was as much as Phil could do, to take his teacher's hand, and that was done more humbly than certainly any previous action of his life. Speak he could not; but so far as Mr. Linden's influence and authority were concerned *that* boy was conquered. Whatever he became in after times, and whatever his mates found him still, — and they were not open-mouthed in praise, — for his teacher that boy was a different boy.

On his way out of the house he chanced to pass Faith, and did so without a sign of recognition, giving her about as wide a berth as if she had been a ghost. At the door he met Dr. Harrison coming in; but the doctor perhaps did not recognise him. Once clear, Phil ran for it. And at the stair-foot the doctor found Faith.

"Dr. Harrison," she said with grave simpleness, "if you will allow me, I should like to see you dress Mr. Linden's arm. If you go to Quilipeak there will be nobody to do it, —

and I think I can learn. Mother is afraid, and it would be very disagreeable to her."

"And not to you?" said the doctor.

"Not *so* disagreeable. I think I can do it," she answered, meeting his look steadily.

"You must not!" said he. "*You* were not made for such things. Could do it! I don't doubt you could do anything. But if I go, I will send Dr. Limbre in my place. There is no need for *you* to do disagreeable work. Now it's pleasant to me!"

"Dr. Limbre I shouldn't like to have come into the house," said Faith. "And you know he can't leave his own house now — he is sick. I will go up with you, if you please."

Dr. Harrison could but follow her, as she tripped up the stairs before him; but there is no reasonable doubt he would have sent her on some other errand if he could. Faith tapped at the door, and they entered the room together.

"How do you do?" said Dr. Harrison rather gravely, approaching the couch.

Now the fact was, that those two previous interviews had been both long and exciting; and the consequent prostration was greater than usual; so though Mr. Linden did take down the hand which covered his eyes, and did meet the doctor's look with his accustomed pleasantness, his words were few. Indeed he had rather the air of one whose mind has chosen a good opportunity to ride rampant over the prostrate flesh and blood, and who has about given up all attempts to hold the bridle. Whether Dr. Harrison perceived as much, or whether there might be some other reason, his words were also few. He addressed himself seriously to work.

"Will you permit me to introduce an apprentice?" he said, in a more commonplace way than was usual for him, as he was removing Mr. Linden's wrapper from the arm. Faith had come quietly up to the head of the couch and was standing there.

"Is not that the doctor's prerogative?"

"Hum —" said the doctor doubtfully; but he did not explain himself further.

Faith had come close to the head of the couch, but stood a little back, so that Mr. Linden could not see whether she looked like fainting or not. There were no signs of that, for the lessening of colour in her cheeks, which was decided, kept company with a very clear and intent eye. One little caught breath he might hear, when the wounded arm was first laid bare; but not another. The doctor heard it too, for he looked up, but Faith was gravely and quietly busy with what she had come there to see; giving it precisely the same simplicity of attention that she brought to her physical geography or her French exercise; and that was entire. She did not shrink; she rather pressed forward and bent near, to acquaint herself perfectly with what was done; and once or twice asked a question as to the reason or the use of something. Dr. Harrison glanced up at her the first time — it might have been with incipient impatience — or irony, — but if either, it disappeared. He answered her questions straightforward and sensibly, giving her, and with admirable precision, exactly the information she desired, and even more than absolutely that. For everything else, the work went on in silence. When the doctor however was standing at the table a moment, preparing his lint or something else, and Faith had followed him there and stood watching; he said to her over the table in a sotto voce aside — but with a sharp glance —

"Was the information true, that we received the other night? — under the lanterns?"

"What a singular question!" said Mr. Linden from his couch.

"Pourquoi?" said the doctor as simply as if the original words had been addressed to Mr. Linden himself. "Well, it may be a singular question, for it was singular information. Was it well-founded, Miss Derrick?"

"No — at a venture," said Mr. Linden, with just the sort

of air with which a sick person puts in his word and assumes superior knowledge.

The doctor looked at one and at the other; Mr. Linden's face told him nothing, any more than his words; Faith, by this time, was covered with confusion. That at least it might be visible to only one person, she moved back to her former place.

"Were you behind us?" said the doctor; — "or were you French enough to come by invisibly?"

"Is that the last new method?" said Mr. Linden. "You have been in Paris since I was."

"Never got so far as that though, I am sorry to say," said the doctor coming back to the couch. "But after all, that was very vague information — it didn't tell one much — only I have a personal interest in the subject. But I am glad you spoke — the man that can tell the dream should be able to give the interpretation. What did it mean, Linden?"

"Behold a man of an enquiring turn of mind!" said Mr. Linden with the same half listless half amused air. "He asks for truth, and when that tarries demands interpretation."

"I don't know what sort of a man I behold!" said the doctor, moving his eyes with a double expression for an instant from Mr. Linden's arm to his face.

"I should think you were a German student in pursuit of 'the Idea'!" said Mr. Linden taking a quiet survey of the doctor's face. "Have you completed the circle, or is there still hope the Idea may seize you?"

"The idea seized me a good while ago," said the doctor, with a most comical mock confessional look.

"Well then," said Mr. Linden in a sort of confidential tone, "what is your opinion upon the great German question — whether it is better to be One and Somewhat, or to be Nought and All?"

"You see," — said the doctor, standing back and suspending operations, — "*everybody* can't be One and Somewhat!"

"Then you choose the comprehensive side —" said Mr. Linden. "That is without doubt the most difficult, — the One and Somewhat is called egotistical, but to be Nought and All! — one must be — what do you suppose?"

"A philanthropist, I should suppose!" the doctor answered, with a change of expression *not* agreeable. And returning to his work, for awhile he behaved unusually like other people; not hurrying his work, but doing it with a grave steady attention to that and nothing else — answering Faith, and saying no more. Perhaps however he thought silence might be carried too far; or else had an unsatisfied mood upon him; for as he was finishing what he had to do, he looked up again to Faith and remarked,

"What do you think of this for our quiet town, Miss Derrick? Has Mr. Linden any enemies in Pattaquasset — that you know?"

It was merciless in the doctor; for through all this time she had been in a state of confusion — as he knew — that made speech undesirable, though she had spoken. And she didn't answer him now, except by a quickly withdrawn glance.

"Who do you suppose loves him well enough," pursued the doctor, "to send a charge of duck shot into him like that?"

A sudden little cry of pain, driven back before it was well begun, was heard and but just heard, from Faith. The doctor looked up.

"I was afraid this — Are you faint?" he said gently.

"No sir, —" she answered; and she stood still as before, though the overspread colour which had held its ground for a good while past, had given way now and fluttered painfully. But the doctor's words brought Mr. Linden, for the first time since his accident — to a perfectly erect position on the couch — with a total disregard of where his arm went, or what became of its bandages.

"What are you about!"

"I declare, I don't know!" said Dr. Harrison, standing

back. "I *thought* I was just disposing of you comfortably for the day — but I am open to conviction!"

The left hand let go its grasp of the couch — taken so suddenly, and for which the wounded arm took swift vengeance; and Mr. Linden laid himself down on the cushions again, the colour leaving his cheeks as fast as it had come.

"What's the matter, Linden?" said the doctor with rather a kind look of concern. "You have hurt yourself."

Faith left the room.

"I fear I have disarranged some of your work."

The doctor examined and set to rights.

"I'll see how you do this evening. What ailed you to pitch into me like that, Linden?"

"I think the 'pitching in' came upon me," he answered pleasantly.

"It seems so, indeed. I hope you won't try this kind of thing again. I am sure you won't to-day."

And so the doctor went. A quarter of an hour or a little more had gone by, when the light knock came at Mr. Linden's door that he had certainly learned to know by this time; and Faith came in, bearing a cup of cocoa. The troubled look had not entirely left her face, nor the changeful colour; but she was not thinking of herself.

"I knew you were tired, Mr. Linden — Would you like this — or some grapes — or wine — better?"

The most prominent idea in Mr. Linden's mind just then, was that he had already had what he did not like; but that had no place in the look which answered her, as he raised himself a little (and but a little) to take the cup from her hand.

"Pet would thank you better than I can now, Miss Faith."

She stood looking down at him, with a little sorrowing touch about the lines of her mouth.

"Do you know how much better two cups of cocoa are than one?" said Mr. Linden.

"I don't know how you can have two at once, Mr. Linden."

"Then I will bestow one upon you — and wait while you get it."

"I am well —" she said, looking amused through her gravity, and shaking her head. "And besides, I couldn't take it, Mr. Linden." And to put an end to that subject, Faith had recourse to the never failing wood fire; and from thence went round the room finishing what she had failed to do in the morning; coming back at the point of time to take Mr. Linden's cup. He looked at her a little as he gave it back.

"You are too tired to go over all those lessons to-day — which do you like best? will you bring it?"

"I am not tired at all," she said with some flitting colour, — "but *you* are, Mr. Linden. "Won't you rest — sleep — till after dinner — and then, if you like, let me come?"

"I will let you come then — and stay now," he said smiling.

"Let me stay and be silent then — or do something that will not tire you. Please, Mr. Linden!"

"Your line of action lies all within that last bound," he said gently. "But you may read French if you will — or write it and let me look over you, — or another geographical chapter. Neither need make me talk much."

The hint about looking over her writing startled Faith amazingly, but perhaps for that very reason she took it as the delicate expression of a wish. That would be a trial, but then too it would call for the least exertion on the part of her teacher. Faith was brave, if she was fearful, and too really humble to have false shame; and after an instant's doubt and hesitation, she said, though she felt it to her fingers' ends,

"My exercise is all ready — it only wants to be copied — but how could you look over me, Mr. Linden?"

"Could you do such an inconvenient thing as to use that small atlas for a table? and bring it here by me — I am not quite fit to sit up just now."

Faith said no more words, but went for her exercise and sat down to write it, as desired, under an observing and she knew a critical eye. It was well her business engrossed her very completely; for she was in an extremely puzzled and disturbed state of mind. Dr. Harrison's words about the occasion of Mr. Linden's accident, carelessly run on, had at last unwittingly given her the clue her own innocent spirit might have waited long for; and grief and pain would have almost overcome her, but for a conflicting feeling of another kind raised by the preceding colloquy between the two gentlemen. Faith was in a state of profound uncertainty, whether Mr. Linden's words had meant anything or nothing. They were spoken so that they might have meant nothing — but then Phil Davids had just been with him — what for? — and whatever Mr. Linden's words might have meant, Faith's knowledge of him made her instinctively know, through all the talk, that they had been spoken for the sake of warding off something disagreeable from *her* — not for himself. She tried as far as she could to dismiss the question from her thoughts — she could not decide it — and to go on her modest way just as if it had not been raised; and she did; but for all that her face was a study as she sat there writing. For amid all her abstraction in her work, the thought of the *possibility* that Mr. Linden might have known what he was talking about, would send a tingling flush up into her cheeks; and sometimes again the thoughts of pain that had been at work would bring upon her lip almost one of those sorrowful curves which are so lovely and so pure on the lip of a little child — and rarely seen except there. All this was only by the way; it did not hinder the most careful attention to what she was about, nor the steadiest working of her quite unsteady fingers, which she knew were very likely to move *not* according to rule.

For a little while she was suffered to go on without interruption, other than an occasional word about the French part of her exercise; but presently Mr. Linden's hand began to come now and then with a modifying touch upon her pen and fingers. At first this was done with a gentle "forgive me!"

or, "if you please, Miss Faith," — after that without words, though the manner always expressed them; and once or twice, towards the very end of the lesson, he told her that such a letter was too German — or too sophisticated; and shewed her a more Saxon way. Which admonitions he helped her, as well as he could, to bear, by a quietness which was really as kind, as it seemed oblivious of all that had disturbed or could disturb her. And the words of praise and encouragement were spoken with their usual pleasure-taking and pleasure-giving effect. All this after a time effectually distracted Faith from all other thoughts whatever. When it was done, she sat a moment looking down at the paper, then looked up and gave him a very frank and humble "Thank you, Mr. Linden!" from face and lips both.

If Faith liked approbation — that clover-honey to a woman's taste, so far beyond the sickly sweets of flattery and admiration — she might have been satisfied with the grave look of Mr. Linden's eyes at her then.

"You are a brave little child!" he said. "I wish I could do something to give you a great deal of pleasure!"

"Pleasure!" — said Faith, and what was very rare with her, not only her face flushed but her eyes, so that she turned them away, — "why it is all pleasure to me, Mr. Linden!" — 'Such pleasure as I never had before,' — she was near saying, but she did not say.

"Well I must not let you tire yourself," he said with a smile, "for that would not be pleasant to me. Have you been out to-day?"

"No," said Faith, thinking of her brown moreen.

"Nor yesterday — that will not do, Miss Faith. I am afraid I must give you up to the open air for a good part of this afternoon."

"What shall I do there?" said Faith smiling.

"Let the wind take you a walk — I wish I could be of the party. But the wind is good company, Miss Faith, and talks better than many people, — and the walk you want."

"So I want to finish my wood-box," said Faith, looking at

the corner of the fireplace. "And I should think you would be tired of seeing the wood lie there, Mr. Linden. I am. I have got to go out this evening too —" she said with a little hesitation, —"to see tnat microscope."

Mr. Linden was silent a moment.

"The microscope does make some difference," he said, — "as for the wood-box, Miss Faith, I don't think I can permit it to have any voice in the matter, — you may leave it for me to finish. But if you are going up there this evening — there are two or three things I should like to talk to you about first."

"Then shall I come by and by?" she said. "I must do something else before dinner."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Well child!" said Mrs. Derrick as they took their seats at the dinner-table, "what *have* you been about all day? I've just spent the morning looking over those apples, so I've had no chance to look you up. How's Mr. Linden? does the doctor think he's getting better?"

"He is, I hope, mother; the doctor didn't say anything about it." And a little shudder ran over Faith's shoulders, which she was glad her mother could make nothing of if she saw. "I have been as busy as you have, mother — so I couldn't look *you* up — nor my wood-box either."

"Learning all the world!" said her mother smiling, though there was a little touch of regretfulness not quite kept down. "I think I'd rather sit and look at you, child, than eat my dinner. What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"I've got a little ironing to do after dinner, mother, and something to make for tea — and Mr. Linden wants to see me for something. I'll get ready for Judge Harrison's, and then after I am through up stairs I'll come down and see to you and my box together. I wish you were going with me, mother."

And Faith leaned her head on her hand.

"Don't you want to go, pretty child?" said Mrs. Derrick fondly.

"No, mother — but I couldn't help it. I found I should have to go sooner or later."

"I'd go with you in a minute," said her mother, "if it wasn't for Mr. Linden. I don't care a pin whether they want me or not, Faith, if *you* do. And I dare say some of the boys will be here" — Mrs. Derrick looked perplexed, as at the feeling of some unknown possibility. "Shall I, pretty child?" she said with an anxious face, — "what are you thinking of, child?"

Faith came behind her and put both arms round her and kissed first one side of her face and then the other.

"Mother!" she said with those silvery tones, — "I don't want anything! I suppose I shall like to see the microscope — but I'd rather stay at home and learn my lessons. Don't look *so!*" — Which with another kiss upon her lips, finished off Mrs. Derrick's anxiety.

The ironing and the 'something for tea' Faith despatched with extra diligence and speed, and then dressed herself for the evening. It was not much extra dressing; only a dark stuff dress a little finer than ordinary; the white ruffle round the neck and wrists was the same. And then, giving a few minutes to the seeking of some added help to quietness, for Faith's mind had been strangely disturbed, she went again to Mr. Linden's room. A gentle vision she was, if ever one was seen, when she entered it.

"You say I mustn't thank you, Mr. Linden," she said giving him back his sister's letter; — "but — will you thank *her* for me?"

"I don't think she deserves many thanks," he said with a smile, "but I will tell her."

The course of study that afternoon was peculiar, and eminently a *talk*. Mr. Linden called for none of the usual books at first, but began by giving Faith a very particular account of the whole process of circulation; thence diverging right and left, in the most erratic manner as it seemed

to her, — passing from the bright crystal points in chymistry to the blue mould on a piece of bread, and then explaining to her the peculiar mechanism of a fly's eye. Two or three times he sent her to the cupboard for some book to shew her an illustration of the subject, but if there was any connecting link that she could see between one and another, it was simply the wonderful minute perfection of the world. And she needed none — for the different things were touched upon so clearly and yet with such a happy absence of needless details, that they stood forth in full relief, and set off each other. The daylight was already failing, and the red firelight was playing hide and seek with the shadows in Mr. Linden's room, before he gave her a chance to think what time it was. When she saw it, Faith started up.

"I told mother I would come and see her before I went!" — she said, drawing a long breath like a person in an atmosphere he can't get enough of. Then with a little change of tone, after standing a minute looking at the fire, she went on. — "All *I* can do, is to drive the nails into that wood-box — but I'll do it before to-morrow." She held out her hand as she spoke.

"No you must not," Mr. Linden said, as he took the hand. "To-night you will be out, and you must not give me a late breakfast, Miss Faith! — therefore you must go to bed as soon as you come home, and leave the box to *me*."

Faith ran away and did not go to her hammering just then. She brought a low bench to her mother's feet, sat down there; and taking Mrs. Derrick's hands from whatever they were about, wrapped both arms round herself, laying her head on her mother's lap.

"Mother," she said caressingly, — "I couldn't come down before. I was so busy and so interested, I didn't in the least know what time it was; and I hadn't a chance to think."

"I'm sure I'm glad, pretty child," said her mother, bending down to kiss her. "I think sometimes you think too much. But you look just like a baby, for all that. I'm sure I shall

always love Mr. Linden for pleasing you so much," said Mrs. Derrick stroking Faith's hair, "even though he does please himself too."

Faith secured that hand again and held them both wrapped round her; but further words for a moment spoke not.

"I shall come home as early as I can," she said;—"mother, time enough to do everything for breakfast."

"You sha'n't do a thing, child," said her mother. "You may come home as early as you like, but I'm going to keep you out of the works. I feel so grand when you're up-stairs studying — you can't think! You wouldn't know me, Faith."

Faith laughed, the laugh that was music to Mrs. Derrick's ears, and indeed would have been to any, and held the hands closer.

"I feel a little grand too," — she said, — "sometimes — in a way —"

This did not seem to be one of the times, or else feeling grand had a soporific effect; for Faith's eyelids presently drooped, and when Dr. Harrison came to the house and for some time before, she was fast asleep on her mother's lap.

"Psyche!" — exclaimed Dr. Harrison as he discerned by the firelight the state of the case. Mrs. Derrick gave him a little reproving glance for speaking so loud, but other reply made none, save a low-spoken polite offer of a chair.

"Thank you — I am going up to see Mr. Linden. Miss Derrick was so good as to promise she would go with me to see my sister this evening. In these circumstances," — said Dr. Harrison in his softest voice — "do you think it would be presumption to wake her up?"

"Well go up, then," said Mrs. Derrick, "and I'll wake her up before you come down."

Which arrangement took effect; and in a very few minutes thereafter, Dr. Harrison's horse making much better speed than old Crab could do now, Faith was deposited safely at

Judge Harrison's door. There she was received with open arms and great exultation by Miss Sophy and with great cordiality and pleasure by the Judge; and with a certain more *un*certain amount of both by Mrs. Somers, whom Faith found there, the only addition to the family party; while the doctor stood complacently on the rug, in silence surveying everybody, like a man who has gained his point.

"Well Julius," said Mrs. Somers, "how's Mr. Linden tonight? did you see him?"

"Yes ma'am — I saw him."

"Well how is he?" repeated Mrs. Somers.

"He is — very happily situated," said the doctor. "I should like to be in his place."

"What do you go there twice a day for? Do you think him worse? You began with going once," said Mrs. Somers.

"Always begin gently," said Dr. Harrison. "You get on faster."

"How soon do you expect to take up your abode there altogether, at that rate?"

"At what rate, aunt Ellen? You are too fast for me."

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Somers, "do you suppose I want to be told what you go there for? — what I *do* want to know, is whether he's like to get well, and how soon."

"He will be conquering Pattaquasset in a few weeks," said the doctor.

"I wonder whether he'll conquer Phil Davids," said Mrs. Somers. "I should like to see that done. Julius, did you ever find out anything about the man that fired the shot?"

"Really, aunt Ellen, I am not a detective" — said the doctor carelessly, looking at Faith, who kept as quiet as a dormouse. "If it had been my business I suppose I should have found out."

"I think I heard you opine that Mr. Linden knew" — said Mrs. Somers. "And I think somebody ought to find out — unless you want the thing done over again. Don't you think so, Judge Harrison?"

"Well my dear," said the Judge, "I understand Mr. Lin-

den to have been actuated by a very benevolent motive — I understand his feelings. He wouldn't run the risk of accusing a man unjustly — I can't blame him. It's right, I think, though it's provoking. What do you think, Miss Faith?"

Faith lifted her eyes, but perhaps the doctor saw in her changing cheek some token of the pain he had stirred in the morning. He prevented her reply.

"Ladies don't think about these things, my dear sir! — Aunt Ellen is so sharp she gets ahead of her sex. Let me have the honour of suggesting a pleasanter subject of meditation. I have seen to-night, aunt Ellen, the most exquisite and valuable jewelry I have ever seen in my life!"

"Here in Pattaquasset!" said her sister.

"In Pattaquasset — or perhaps in the world."

"Don't excite yourself, Sophy," said Mrs. Somers, — "let's hear what they were, first."

Faith, like everybody else, looked for the doctor's answer, though she hardly knew what she was looking at.

"A lady, aunt Ellen," the doctor went on, glancing at her, — "had made a necklace of her mother's arms, — and a cross, more precious than diamonds, of her mother's hands; and clasping this cross to her breast, adorned with this most exquisite and rare adornment, had — gone to sleep!"

"And for once," said Mrs. Somers, "you preferred the wearer to the jewels and — went into a trance! I can imagine you!"

"I? not I!" — said the doctor — "I went up stairs. But you have no idea of the effect."

Faith had been experiencing some of the scattering fire of society, which hits no one knows where and no one knows when. First the name of Phil Davids had ploughed up the ground at her right; then the question about the man who had fired the shot had ploughed up the ground at her left; and shaken first by one and then by the other she had welcomed the doctor's change of subject and now was smiling as pleased as anybody.

"I didn't suppose the trance was a long one," said Mrs.

Somers, with a little raising of her eyebrows. "Faith, my dear, what have you done to that little Seacomb child? I can't get over my astonishment at his transformation."

"I am afraid there isn't much transformation yet," Faith said. "He listens very quietly and behaves well in school — but I don't know how he is at home."

"You are not a school teacher *too?*" said the doctor.

"It isn't a bad trade," said Faith, though her cheeks had answered for her another way.

"Not a bad trade — certainly — but one may have too many trades. Aunt Ellen — I had the honour — do you believe it? — of giving Miss Derrick lessons this morning."

"I think she was very good to permit it," said Mrs. Somers composedly.

"She was very good" — said the doctor demurely. "I am afraid that is her character generally!"

He was called off by his father, and Miss Harrison seized Faith and planted her between herself and Mrs. Somers on the sofa.

"Don't mind his nonsense, Faith! Julius never can talk like anybody else. Why haven't you been here this age?"

"I've been busy, Sophy."

"Why wouldn't you go to ride with us? Julius wouldn't go after what you said. Why wouldn't you?"

"It was Sunday, Sophy."

"Well — what if it was?"

"Sunday isn't my day — I can't use it for my own work."

"But taking a little ride isn't work?"

Faith hesitated.

"Isn't it work to the horses, Sophy? And if it is only pleasure — Sunday has its own pleasures, dear Sophy, — I can't have both."

"Why can't you?"

"Because, — if I take these, God will not give me those," Faith said very gravely.

"But Faith!" — said Miss Harrison looking disturbed, — "you didn't use to be so religious?"

Faith's face flushed a little and was touchingly humble as she said, "No — I didn't."

"What's changed you so?"

"It isn't a bad change, dear Sophy!"

"I don't believe anything's bad about you," said Miss Harrison kissing her, — "but don't change too far, dear; don't forget your old friends."

"I want them to change too," said Faith looking at her winningly.

"That's right Faith, stand by your colours!" said Mrs. Somers, with a tone and manner that came quite from the other side of her character. "Sophy — your mother wouldn't know her child, to hear you ask such questions."

Miss Harrison looked troubled, and left the room. Dr. Harrison immediately took her place, and almost as immediately tea came in.

That is to say, tea and chocolate were handed round, together with a sufficient abundance and variety of delicate substantials to suit the air and the style of a country town. Judge Harrison's was the only house in Pattaquasset where tea was served in this way, — except perhaps the De Staff's; though there was this difference to be observed, — the De Staffs never had tea carried round unless when they had company; at the Harrisons' it was never carried round unless they were alone.

Dr. Harrison attended politely to his aunt, but he was eyes and hands for Faith; finding at the same time very agreeable occupation for her ears. If people could be content with being agreeable! But in the midst of cold tongue and chocolate the doctor broke out again.

"After all," said he, — "what about that piece of curious information, Miss Derrick? You know I was balked this morning and led a Will o' the wisp chase after the Idea! Is Mr. Linden in the habit of spoiling people's fun in that manner?"

Faith said simply she did not know. She did not, but in private she thought it likely enough.

"Well, about the question," said the doctor helping her to something at the same time, — "what was the truth of it, Miss Derrick? You see I am interested. Was our little informant correct?"

Now Faith had no mind, even in the dark, or about anything, to set her 'yes' against Mr. Linden's 'no.' Besides, she knew that the doctor had heard no names, and whatever might be the extent of Mr. Linden's knowledge, *he* knew nothing. And she was very willing to take the shelter of the shield which had been thrown round her. The deep, deep dye of her cheeks she could not help; but she answered with tolerable quietness, behind that shield,

"I hoped you had got enough of the subject this morning."

The doctor had enough of it now! He changed his ground with all speed, and for the rest of the evening Dr. Harrison shewed himself at his best.

So soon as the removal of tea things gave him a clear field, he brought out his microscope; and from that instant Faith almost forgot and forgave him everything. She forgot everything present — the Judge, Sophy, and Mrs. Somers; and came to the table so soon as the bright brass of the little machine caught her eye. The machine alone was a wonder and beauty; it seemed to Faith like an elegant little brass gun mounted on the most complicate and exquisite of gun carriages — with its multiplication of wheels and screws and pins, by which its adjustment might be regulated to a hair; with its beautiful workmanship and high finish, and its most marvellous and admirable purpose and adaptation. Dr. Harrison had never adjusted his microscope with more satisfaction, perhaps, than with those childish womanly eyes looking on; and neither he nor *many* other people ever performed better the subsequent office of exhibiting it. He troubled Faith now with nothing; his very manner was changed; and with kindness and sense most delicate, most thoughtful, most graceful always, gave her all he could give her.

He was a trifle surprised to find that the amount of that

was not more. There was no lack indeed; he could talk and she could listen indefinitely — and did; — nevertheless he found some of his channels of communication stopped off. At the first thing he shewed her, Faith looked for an instant and then withdrawing her eye from the microscope and facing him with cheeks absolutely paled with excitement and feeling, exclaimed rapturously,

"Oh! — are those the chalk shells?"

The doctor hadn't counted upon her knowing anything of chalk shells.

"Aunt Ellen —-" said he, as he looked to shift or adjust something — "do you think Miss Derrick has ever lived upon anything worse than roses?"

"Upon something stronger, I fancy," said Mrs. Somers, a little surprised in her turn, but well pleased too, for Faith had come nearer her heart that evening than ever before, and the voyage of discovery was pleasant.

"I should certainly think I was in Persia!" said the doctor, — "only the bulbul knows nothing of scientific discoveries, I fancy."

But Faith was in no danger of hearing, or caring, if she had understood; she had gone back to the chalk shells, and back still further, from them, into the world of those perfections which God had made *for himself*. A new world, now for the first time actually seen by her, and for a moment she almost lost her standing in this. Mrs. Somers watched her, smiling and curious.

She drew back presently with a long breath, to give the other ladies a chance; but Miss Harrison had looked all she cared to look, and Mrs. Somers was not new to the thing. They took a view occasionally, one for form, the other for real interest; but for the most part Faith found the exhibition was for her and she and the doctor might have it all their own way. A long way they made of it; for the doctor found a good deal of talking to do, and Faith was most ready to hear. He talked well and gave her a great deal of what she liked, with a renewal every now and then of his first surprise; for in

the midst of some elaborate explanation he was launching into for her benefit, most innocently and simply Faith would bring him up with a gentle "Yes, I know," — not spoken with the faintest arrogance of knowledge, but merely to prevent him going into needless detail; and herself too rapt in the delight of the subject that occupied her to have any heed of the effect of her words.

"I have kept the best for the last," said the doctor, when this exhibition had lasted a much longer time than Faith was aware of; — I thought you would like to see the circulation; — and I have sent all over town for a frog — found one at last, by great happiness."

"All over town!" said Mrs. Somers, — "do try out of town next time, and save yourself trouble."

"Have you got to kill the frog, Julius?" said Miss Harrison with a disturbed face.

"I hope not!" said the doctor gravely. "That would rather interfere with our purposes than otherwise, Sophy. — Aunt Ellen, I never learned the real extent of 'town' yet — when I was a boy it seemed to me to have no limits; — and now it seems to me to have no centre. Tell James to bring in that frog, Sophy."

Miss Harrison retreated from the frog; but the doctor assured Faith that he was in very tolerable circumstances, shut up in a little bag; and that he was only going to be requested to exhibit a small portion of the skin of his toe, and to hold himself still for that purpose; which benevolent action the doctor would help him to perform by putting him in a slight degree of confinement. The holding still was however apparently beyond the frog's benevolent powers, and it was some little time before the doctor could persuade him to it. Then Faith saw what she had never seen nor fully imagined before.

"O Sophy! — O Mrs. Somers!" — she exclaimed, — "look at this!"

She stood back with a face of delighted wonder. Miss Harrison looked an instant.

"It is curious—" she said. "What are those little things, Julius?"

"You have heard of the 'circulating medium,'" said the doctor. "That is it."

Faith evidently had never heard of the 'medium' referred to. Turning to her, the doctor began a clear full account of the philosophy of what she saw going on in the frog's foot. But there she met him again.

"Yes, I know, Dr. Harrison," — she said with the simple tone of perfect intelligence. The doctor bit his lip, while Faith stooped over the microscope and read, and read, what was to be seen there.

"Faith," whispered Sophy, "it's cruel of me — but I am afraid your mother will be anxious, and Julius will never let you know —"

"What time is it?" said Faith starting up.

"About — half an hour — after eight—" said the doctor.

"After *ten*, Faith."

Not another look did Faith give, but for her bonnet, and went home as fast as the doctor would walk with her.

Whether Mrs. Derrick was anxious or no, she did not say, but glad she certainly was to see Faith back.

"Well child," she said, undoing the wrappers from Faith's head and neck, "I hope you've had a grand time?"

"Yes mother, very — only I didn't mean to stay so late. I meant to be home in good time. I have seen everything, mother!"

"Everything!" said her mother, — "I guess at that rate I might say I'd been everywhere."

"Where have you been, mother? anywhere?"

"I've been out to tea!" said her mother, with the manner of one who has a remarkable secret on hand.

"*You* have! Where, mother?"

"Guess" — said Mrs. Derrick smiling at her. "I went up stairs to tea, Faith! — what do you think of that? What'll you expect to hear of my doing next?"

"Oh mother!" said Faith laughing, — "I am glad! That was the best thing you could have done."

"It wasn't my doing, though," said Mrs. Derrick. "But when I went up with Mr. Linden's tea, he asked me if you had gone, and I said yes, and he said since there was nobody better worth seeing down stairs he wished I'd come and drink tea with him. So I went, child, and it was real pleasant too. And I don't know how it was, but I staid there all the evening, — only I wouldn't let him talk to me, and he just went to sleep as if I hadn't been there. I think he was very tired, Faith. So then I felt very comfortable," added Mrs. Derrick smiling, "and I sat there and watched him till Reuben came — a little while ago."

"Was he tired!" said Faith, the light in her face changing. "He had been talking to me all the afternoon! — Mother, half the pleasure I had to-night he gave me, for he was all the afternoon preparing me for it." She stood looking at the fire reproachfully.

"Why child," said her mother, "I suppose his arm pains him a good deal — and that tires one, you know. He didn't talk to you a bit more than he wanted to, I'll warrant. Why he even talked to *me* all tea-time!" said Mrs. Derrick, as if she felt quite proud in consequence.

"Well mother, we must go to bed *now*, for I must be up very early to finish that box."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Very early it was, when Faith's hammer was at work again on the brown moreen, and short interruption did she give herself from anything that could be spared, till the box was done. It suited her well when it was done. The cover was stuffed, old-fashioned brown binding was lapped over the edges and seams, and fastened off with rows of brass-headed nails; which made it altogether an odd, handsome, antiquated-looking piece of furniture. With this, when her morning work was done and her exercise prepared, Faith went

up to Mr. Linden's room; to see it brought in and placed properly.

"I shall have to put a stop to this state of things!" he said, — "that blue ribband will work me mischief yet. Miss Faith, how can you take advantage of my disabled condition?"

"Are you better this morning, Mr. Linden?"

"The time has not quite come yet for me to be much better. But Miss Faith, if I had known that you *would* wake yourself up early this morning, what do you think I should have done?"

"I can't think, Mr. Linden," she said looking merry.

"I should have invited you and Mrs. Derrick up here to breakfast! — which I only did *not* do, because I could not take the extra trouble upon myself, and because I knew you ought to sleep, till this time."

Faith shook her head a little, perhaps sorry to have missed the breakfast; then went off and brushed away the dust and chips left round the wood-box. Then came and sat down.

"I saw almost everything, last night, Mr. Linden!"

"Well before you go off to last night — will you come to-morrow morning? Now what did you see?"

The bright smile and flush and sparkle answered the invitation; and perhaps Faith thought no other answer was needed; for she gave no other.

"I know now," she said after an instant, "what you were doing all yesterday afternoon, Mr. Linden!"

"I know what you were, Miss Faith."

She smiled innocently and went on,

"All that just fitted me, as you meant it should, to take the good of the evening — and I had a great deal," she said gravely. "I saw almost everything you spoke of — and other things. I saw the chalk shells, Mr. Linden! — and the circulation in a frog's foot; and different prepared pieces of skin; and the moth's plumage! and the silver scale-armour of the *Lepisma*, as Dr. Harrison called it; and more."

"And with very great delight — as I knew you would. I am very glad!"

"Yes," said Faith — "I know a little better now how to understand some things you said the other day. I am very glad I went — only for one thing. —"

"What was that?"

"Dr. Harrison asked such a strange thing of me as we were walking home — at least it seems to me strange."

"May my judgment be brought to bear upon it?" Mr. Linden said after a moment's silence.

"Yes indeed," said Faith; "that was what I was going to ask. He wants me to go with him to see a woman, who is dying, he says, and miserable, — and he wants me to talk to her. He says he does not know how." And half modestly, half timidly, she added, "Is not that going out of my way?"

A quick, peculiar smile on Mr. Linden's face, was succeeded by a very deep gravity, — once or twice the lips parted, impulsively — then took their former firm set; and shading his eyes with his hand he looked into the fire in profound silence.

Very soberly, but in as absolute repose of face, Faith now and then looked at him, and meanwhile waited for his thoughts to come to an end.

"Dr. Harrison said," she remarked after a little while, "that you once told him he had but half learned his profession."

"What did you say, Miss Faith? I mean, not to that, but to the question?"

"I didn't know what to say! — I didn't want to go at all — I don't know whether that was wrong or right; but at last I said I would go. Do you think I was right, Mr. Linden?"

"Did you promise to go *with him?*"

"I didn't know any other way to go," said Faith. "I don't know where the woman lives, and he said I couldn't find it; and old Crab has a lame foot. Dr. Harrison asked

me to go with him. I don't think I should have minded going alone."

"Neither should I mind having you," said Mr. Linden, with a look more doubtful and anxious than Faith had often seen him wear, though it was not bent upon her.

"Do you think I said wrong then, Mr. Linden? I did not like to go — but I thought perhaps I ought."

"I don't think *you* did wrong," was the somewhat definite answer. "I wish I had been alongside of you when the request was made."

A wish which he had not been the first to know. Faith was silent.

"You made a fair promise?" he said — "and feel bound by it?"

"I said I would go," — she said looking at him with her fair, grave face. "If you thought it was wrong, or that I was putting myself out of my way, I would not, Mr. Linden. He asked if he might come for me at two o'clock, and I said yes."

"Miss Faith — you must not make such a promise again!"

She looked at him enquiringly, very soberly, and then her eyes went to the fire and mused there. Mr. Linden was looking at her then, though with eyes still shielded. Once indeed the hand came with a soft touch upon her hair, drawing it back where it had fallen a little; but the motion was quickly checked. She started, looked round with a little frank smile and colour, and instantly went back to her musing.

"I'm afraid I must let you go —" Mr. Linden said presently, smiling a little too, as if it were no use to be grave any longer. "I'm afraid I have no right to hinder you. If I had, I would. Some other time I will tell you part of the wherefore, but the less I say to you before you go, the better. About that, —" he added in his usual manner, — "I think we might write another exercise."

She started up, but paused.

"Mr. Linden," — she said timidly, "Dr. Harrison said he would not be here this morning. Would you like to have me

first — it would be only pleasure to me, if you are not afraid, — do what he does for you?"

He answered at first rather quick, as if he knew what sort of pleasure it was.

"O no! — I can wait, — it cannot signify very much." And then with as quick a recognition of the real pleasure it would be, after all, Mr. Linden compounded matters.

"I am afraid, Miss Faith! — I am naturally timid."

"What does that mean?" said she coming before him and looking with an inquisitive smile. "I don't know, Mr. Linden!"

"Do you expect me to explain such a humiliating confession?"

"No, certainly. — I thought, perhaps, you wouldn't keep to it, after all."

"I am a little afraid for you. What do you suppose I shall do this afternoon while you are gone?"

"I don't know —" she said, looking a little wistfully.

"I shall lie here and study that wood-box. You see I carry out my principles, Miss Faith — I have not thanked you for it."

"I don't think you'll study it very long," said Faith, — "there isn't much in it."

"Somebody has said," replied Mr. Linden, "that 'in every subject there is inexhaustible meaning, — the eye sees in it what the eye brings means of seeing.' You must not limit my power of eyesight."

"If you wouldn't limit my power of something else?" — she said with gentle persistency.

He looked up at her.

"I will not, Miss Faith — then will you please perform your kind office at once? It will be a great comfort to me, and I shall be the better able to do something for you afterwards." And the manner almost made Faith feel as if the proposition had come from her at first.

She went about it, not this first time without some trembling of heart, but with also a spirit that rose above and quite

kept down that. She knew exactly and intelligently what was to be done; it was only the hands that were unwonted, and therefore she feared unskilful. But there are things that some women have by nature, and a skilful hand is one of them; and it was Faith's. Her womanly love and care were enough for all the rest; she made no mistakes, nor delays; and her soft fingers inflicted no pain that it was in the power of fingers to spare. A little longer than the doctor she was perhaps about it; not much, and not more awkward; and that is saying enough.

So soon as that was done, Faith went for her exercise, and sat down as yesterday to write it.

He too went on with the exercise; but watching her, lest relief might be wanted in another quarter. There was nothing of that, though. Quiet and very great satisfaction, was the result of the matter in Faith's mind; at least it was all she permitted to be seen; and now she gave herself happily to the connexion of her nouns and adjectives, and to watching against the 'german' or 'sophisticated' letters in her handwriting. The exercise indeed was fast taking a very compound character; so much so, that Faith might well begin to suspect there had been a two-fold reason for proposing it. But Mr. Linden had a peculiar way of teaching — especially of teaching her; and made her almost forget in the pleasure of learning, the fact that she had need to learn. And as for his memory on the subject, or his perception of how it might touch her, — they were out of sight: she might have been a little child there at his side, for the grave simplicity and frankness of his instructions. And so exercise and reading and philosophy followed on in a quiet train, and the surface of the earth revealed new wonders, and the little French book was closed at the end of a pretty chapter.

"Whenever I get about my duties again, Miss Faith," Mr. Linden said, "I shall make one very stringent rule for our future intercourse."

"What's that, Mr. Linden?" she said, with the face of

quick deep pleasure she always wore when about any of her studies with him.

"From the time when I come home to dinner till I go off again, I will neither speak nor be spoken to, Miss Faith, except in French. That is, you may speak — but I shall not answer."

Faith started a little, looked puzzled, and looked terrified, — as much as she ever did; but rather closed with looking as if it was *impossible*.

"I should make the rule at once," said Mr. Linden smiling, "but I foresee that you would absent yourself entirely. Now when I am down stairs you will have to see me — whether you want to or not."

"But I don't know one word!" said Faith breathlessly. "I am afraid I shall not say, or hear, much, Mr. Linden."

"O you shall hear a great deal — I will take that upon myself."

Faith shook her head, gave the fire a final mending, and ran off; for it was again an hour past the mid-day. Mr. Linden's dinner came up, and was hardly removed before Dr. Harrison followed.

"Well, Linden!" he said coming jauntily in, — "I hope you haven't missed me this morning."

"Not in the least."

"I am glad of that. How do you do? I will try and put you in condition not to miss me this evening — though it is benevolent!" — added the doctor, pulling off his left glove. "It is a great secret — to make oneself missed!"

"It is a secret your gloves will hardly find out, by my fire," said Mr. Linden. "How well you look, doctor! — not a bit like Nought and All."

"No," — said the doctor, — "I believe I disclaimed that particular sphere of existence yesterday. One had need be One and Somewhat in this wind — if one will keep a place in a wagon, or elsewhere! But fire mustn't tempt me, Linden. I'll see to you and be off, and decide what I'll be afterwards."

"You may be off without preamble."

"Do you mean to dismiss me?" exclaimed the doctor raising his eyebrows. "Have I said that you *must* accept my poor services?"

"Why no!" said Mr. Linden, — "doubly no! I am most happy to see you, doctor."

"The happiness will be mutual when I have the felicity of understanding you," said the doctor, settling himself in an attitude. Mr. Linden surveyed him from head to foot.

"I perceive indeed that you are One and Somewhat!" he said, — "you still need 'the four azure chains.' Do you need explanations too?"

"If you'll be so good!" said the doctor. "Or — ha! you don't mean *that*, do you?"

"My arm has been dressed," said Mr. Linden quietly.

"Never trust a woman!" said the doctor wheeling round. "I thought she had got enough of that yesterday. Did she do it well?"

"Excellently well."

"Your face says so as well as your tongue," said the doctor, with an odd manner of despair. "I have lost — not my occupation, for I never had any! — but I have lost my power over you; and she has got it! — I don't know how to whistle, or I suppose I could take comfort in that."

Mr. Linden did not whistle, nor laugh, nor speak, — all that could be said of him was that he lay there very quiet, with his eyes open, looking remarkably well.

"Let a woman alone for doing what she has a mind to!" the doctor went on, in his usual manner now, putting on his gloves. "I tell you what, Linden — they're the hardest creatures to manage there are; — boys are nothing to them! Well, good morning!"

"Good morning," — said Mr. Linden. "I hope you will be able to manage the wind."

The Dr. Harrison who had been up stairs was not at all the Dr. Harrison that met Faith in the hall and escorted her to the carriage. Grave, gentle, graceful, but especially grave, for some reason or other, he was; and not the less

for that agreeable, she thought. Faith was in a sober mood herself; for she was about an undertaking she did not much like; and which Mr. Linden had liked even less. Faith pondered, as they drove swiftly along, what the particular objections had been which he had not chosen to tell her; and now and then thought a little uneasily of the coming interview with the doctor's patient, with Dr. Harrison himself for auditor and spectator. She did not like it; but she had honestly done what she thought right, and Mr. Linden had said *she* was not wrong. And she was bound on the expedition, which she could not get rid of; so though these considerations did float over and over her mind they did not shake what was nevertheless a very happy peacefulness. Faith was glad the doctor was pretty well engaged with his horses; and let her own musings run upon the pleasant things of the morning, and of yesterday, with glances at the delightful new world of work and knowledge into which she had entered, or was entering; and happy resting down on the foundation for all joy so lately known to her. Whirled along on smooth going wheels, in that bright brisk day, little interrupted with talk, these thoughts and meditations took fair little flying passages through her head; chasing and succeeding each other, put in and put out by the lights and shadows, the hills and fields, sky and trees and wind-clouds, as the case might be, and mixing up with them all.

Dr. Harrison had come for her this time in an easy pleasant-going curricle, drawn by beautiful animals, and who felt beautifully in that gay wind. They looked so, certainly, every motion from ears to tail telling of life and the enjoyment of it.

"You are not afraid of anything, I know," said Dr. Harrison, one time when he had been obliged to hold them in with a good deal of decision; — "or I would have brought the old family trotter for you."

"What makes you think so, Dr. Harrison?"

"I have had proof of it," said he looking at her. Faith

shook her head a little, and could have told him several things; but did not.

"You are not afraid of these fellows?"

She said no.

"There is no pleasure in handling what gives you no trouble; — don't you think so?"

Faith sought for illustrations of the subject in her own experience; did not find them.

"Now look at those fellows," the doctor went on. "They are fit to fly out of their skins; but a little bit of steel in their mouths — and a good rein — and a strong hand at the end of it — and they are mine, and not their own," said he, giving them a powerful check at the same time which brought them on their haunches; — "and they know it. Now isn't there some pleasure in this?"

"It is rather a man's pleasure," said Faith; — "isn't it?"

"Do you think so?" said the doctor. "Ah, you know better. Do you mean to say," he added softly, "that a woman doesn't know the pleasure of power?"

"I don't think *I* do," said Faith meeting his eyes with a smile. He smiled too, a different smile from what was usual with him.

The drive was long — much longer than Faith had counted upon, although they went so fast. "Down by the river" — the doctor had said; but it appeared not yet what part of the river he was aiming for. Still it was beautiful; the broken country, open and free, with the cloud shadows and the brilliant sunlight driving across it, and grey sharp rocks everywhere breaking it, and tufts and reaches of brown or sear woodland diversifying it, was not easy to weary of. Nor did Faith weary. The doctor's words had sent her off on a long journey of thought, while she travelled over all that open, sunlight and shadow, country. Starting from the words, "Behold we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us"; — she had gone on to moral government and suasion; the means and the forces of both, not failing to illustrate largely here from personal experience; and on and up to the

one great and strong hand that holds the reins of all, and makes even sunlight and shade, rock and hill, do his work and his bidding.

But now in all that broad picture of life and life work, appeared a little dark spot; which, small as it was, formed for the moment the vanishing point, where every line of beauty and sunlight met and ended. For with that strange recognizing of unknown things, Faith saw before her the house where the dying woman lay, — and knew it for that, before the doctor spoke. A plain, brown, unpainted house; straight and square, with no break of piazza or window blinds; tapestried on the front with frost-bitten gourd vines, the yellow and green fruit yet unscathed. The usual little gate and dooryard common to such country houses; the usual remains of autumn flowers therein; the usual want of trees. Yet by the universal law of indemnification, the house was more picturesque than painting and architecture could have made it. Neighbours it had none, for contrast; but a low woody point of land stretched off behind it, reaching out even into the Mong. And the Mong itself — with its cool sharp glitter in the stirring wind, and the swash of its blue waves at the very foot of the little paling about the house; its white-sailed craft, its white-winged sea gulls; —

> "Our lives are rivers, gliding free
> To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
> The silent grave!
> Thither all earthly pomp and boast
> Roll, to be swallowed up and lost
> In one dark wave.
>
> "Thither the mighty torrents stray,
> Thither the brook pursues its way,
> And tinkling rill.
> There all are equal. Side by side
> The poor man and the son of pride
> Lie calm and still."

Of the two that now entered that little dooryard, one felt all this and one did not. The one who had felt "the power of an endless life," perceived the narrow bounds of this, — to the

one who had nothing beyond, its domain was vast. And as is often the case, the man went first and the angel followed.

The doctor stepped up to the bedside and made some general enquiries. But it did not appear that there was much *he* could do.

"Mrs. Custers," said he presently, "you know I promised I would bring, if I could, a lady to see you. Here she is — Miss Derrick."

Faith came to the side of the bed. Little her quiet face shewed how she was trembling. In her soft sweet way she asked the sick woman how she did. And Mrs. Custers turned her head a little, and gazed up into the blooming face with strange, eager, feverish eyes — eyes that thirsted, but with no bodily thirst. Then she closed them again and turned her face away, but said nothing.

"Have you been sick long?" asked Faith.

She did not answer, then; though as if the tones of Faith's voice were making their way, there came presently a slight quiver of the face, and a bright drop or two that the closed eyelids could not quite keep back. But she was at that point of time where the fear of man has lost its power, — where the doctor loses his supremacy and visiters their interest: where men and things are pushed like shadows into the background, and the mind can see no object save "the great white throne." This was what the silence expressed, — it was not dislike, nor churlishness; but those surface questions failed to reach her where she stood. The next gentle and tender "What is the matter?" — was so spoken that it found her even there. Her eyes came back to Faith's face with the sort of look they had given before. And then she spoke.

"Where would you be going if you were lying where I be?"

Faith heeded not the doctor then, nor anything else in the world. She waited an instant; she had drawn herself up on hearing the question; then leaning forward again she said slowly, tenderly,

"I should be going — to be happy with my divine Redeemer. Are not you?"

"What makes you think you would?"

"Because I have his word for it," said Faith. "He says that whoever believes in him shall not perish, and that every one that loves him shall be with him where he is; — I believe in him and love him with my whole heart; and I know he is true. He will not cast me away." Slowly, clearly, the words were spoken; so that they might every one enter and be received by the ears that heard.

The woman looked at her, — scanned her, examined her, — looked down towards the foot of the bed at the doctor — then back at Faith.

"Do you believe all that?" she said.

"I know it!" — said Faith, with a tiny bit of joy-speaking smile.

Again that intent look.

"Well *he* don't," she said with a motion towards the doctor. "Which of ye am *I* to believe?"

"Don't believe either of us!" said Faith quickly, her look rather brightening than otherwise, though the play of her lips took a complicate character. — "Believe God! Don't you know *his* words?"

"I s'pose I do — some of 'em. I can't believe anything with *him* down there lookin' at me!" she said impetuously. "He said *he* didn't believe — and I keep thinkin' of that."

"Will you believe him, rather than God? — rather than the Lord Jesus, who came and gave his very life for us, to bring us to heaven. Do you think *he* would tell us anything but truth after that? *His* words are, "'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.'"

"Well I'm 'most dead —" said the woman in a sort of cold, hopeless tone.

"Let Jesus make you live!" said Faith, in a voice as warm and loving.

"The doctor said *he* couldn't," she answered in the same tone as before. "He believes that, anyhow."

Faith answered,

"'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'"

That same little quiver passed over the face, but it changed into an irrepressible shudder.

"Sit down here on the bed," she said, looking up at Faith, "and put your face so I can't see his'n — and then you may talk."

And with that fair head for a screen, as if it really warded off some evil influence, Mrs. Custers lay and listened quietly for a while; but then her hands were clasped over her face, and she broke into a low sobbing fit — as if mind and body were pouring out their griefs together. Not loud, not hysterical; but weary, subdued, overpowering; until the utter exhaustion brought sleep.

Faith got off the bed then, — looked at her, looked at the doctor, — and then by an irrepressible feeling, sunk on her knees. Leave *her*, go out of the house with *him*, she could not, until she had put the cause of them all into the hand she knew *her* friend and wished theirs. A few moments' motionless hiding of her face, during which, as indeed during the whole conversation, Dr. Harrison was nearly motionless too, and used his eyes silently; and Faith rose from her knees. She gave another look at the poor weary face that lay there, and then led the way out of the house. The doctor followed her, having perhaps got more than enough of the result of his ride. But as he was unfastening his horses, or rather after he had done it and was waiting to hand her in, Faith addressed him.

"Dr. Harrison, on whose errand do you go telling that woman that God's word is not true?"

She spoke gently, yet as the doctor faced her he saw that her soft eye could be steady as an eagle's. He did not answer.

"Not for God's service," she went on answering herself, — "nor for yours. See to it!"

She turned and let him put her into the carriage and they set off again. But the drive homewards promised to be as silent as the drive out had been. The doctor was grave after another fashion now, with a further-down gravity, and scarce looked at anything but his horses; except when a glance or a hand came to see if Faith was well wrapped up from the wind, or to make her so. And either action was done not with his accustomed grace merely, but with even a more delicate tender care of her than ordinary. Faith was in little danger of cold for some time. Grief and loving sorrow were stirred and stirring too deeply for thought or feeling of anything else; only that beneath and with them her heart was singing, singing, in notes that seemed to reach her from the very harps of heaven, —

> "I thank Thee, uncreated Sun,
> That thy bright beams on me have shined!"

As they went on, however, and mile after mile was passed over again, and the afternoon waned, the wind clouds seemed thicker and the wind more keen; Faith felt it and began to think of home. The horses felt it too, and perhaps also thought of home, for they travelled well.

"What are you meditating, Miss Derrick?" the doctor said at length, almost the first word he had spoken.

"I was thinking, just at that minute, sir, of the use of beauty in the world."

"The use of beauty!" said the doctor, looking at her; he would have been astonished, if the uppermost feeling had not been of relief. "What is its use? To make the world civilized and habitable, isn't it?"

"No —" said Faith, — "I should think it was meant to make us good. Look at the horses, Dr. Harrison!"

The carriage had turned an angle of the road, which brought the wind pretty strongly in their faces. The horses seemed to take it as doubtful fun, or else to be inclined to make too much fun of it. They were all alive with spirit, rather excited than allayed by their miles of quick travelling. The doctor tried to quiet them by rein and voice both.

"They get a little too much oats for the work they do," said he. "I must take them out oftener. Take care of this wind, Miss Derrick; — I haven't a hand to help you. What's that? —"

'That' was a bunch of weeds thrown into the road just before the horses' heads, from over the fence; and was just enough to give them the start which they were ready for. They set off instantly at full run. The road was good and clear; the carriage was light; the wind was inspiriting, the oats suggestive of mischief. The doctor's boasted rein and hand with all the aid of steel bits, were powerless to stop them. In vain he coaxed and called to them; their speed increased every minute; they had made up their minds to be frightened, and plunged along accordingly. The doctor spoke once or twice to Faith, encouraging or advising her; she did not speak nor stir.

They were just nearing the brow of a hill, when an unlucky boy in the road, thinking to stay their progress, stepped before them and waved his hat over his head. Faith heard an execration from the doctor, then his shout to her, "Don't stir, Miss Derrick!" — and then she hardly knew anything else. The horses plunged madly down the hill, leaped carriage and all across a fence at the bottom of it, where the road turned, overthrew themselves and landed the doctor and Faith on different sides of the carriage, in a meadow.

The doctor picked himself up again, entirely unhurt, and going round to Faith lifted her head from the ground. But she was stunned by the fall, and for a few minutes remained senseless.

In these circumstances, no house being near, the doctor naturally shouted to a cap or hat which he saw passing along the road. Which cap also it happened belonged to Sam Stoutenburgh, who was on an errand into the country for his father.

If ever Dr. Harrison was unceremoniously put aside, it was then. Sam had come rather leisurely at first — then with a sort of flying bound which cleared the fence like a thistle

down, he bore down upon the doctor, and taking up Faith as easily as if she had been a kitten, absolutely ran with her to a spring which welled up through the long meadow grass a few yards off. There the doctor found him applying the cold water with both gentleness and skill, for Sam Stoutenburgh had a mother, and her fingers had been so employed about his own head many a time.

"You're a handy fellow!" said the doctor with a mixture of expressions, as he joined his efforts to Sam's. — "That will do it!" —

For Faith opened her eyes. The first word was "Mother!" — then she sat up and looked round, and then covered her face.

"Are you hurt?" said Dr. Harrison after an instant.

"No sir, I think not — I believe not."

"Can you stand up?"

With the help of his hand she could do it easily. She stood silent, supported by him, looking on the prostrate horses and shattered curricle; then turned her grave eyes on the doctor.

"Don't stand too long, Miss Faith!" said Sam earnestly, with trembling lips too, for the manhood in him had not got very far. "Are you *sure* you're not hurt?"

"Sam!" said Faith giving her hand to him. — "I didn't know it was you who was helping me."

"I only wish I'd been here for you to fall upon!" said Sam, with a queer mingling of grief and pleasure. "Seems as if folks couldn't always be in just the right place."

"I am not hurt," she said with a little shudder.

"Now, how are you going to do to get home?" said the doctor looking much concerned. "Shall I —"

"I will walk home," she said interrupting him.

"You are not able! We are three miles, at least, from Mrs. Derrick's house. You could not bear it."

"I can walk three miles," she said with a faint, fair smile. "I will go home with Sam, and you can take care of the horses."

"That would be a tolerably backhanded arrangement!" said the doctor. — "Young man, will you bring these horses into town for me — after I get them on their legs — to Judge Harrison's, or anywhere? — I must take care of this lady and see her safe."

"Yes — I'll bring 'em into town," said Sam, "but Miss Faith's to be seen to first — if they don't get on their legs all night! *That*'ll be a work of time, I take it. Miss Faith — could you walk just a little way? — there's a house there, and maybe a wagon."

"You don't understand me," said the doctor. "I asked if you would do me the favour to bring my horses into town. *I* will take care of the lady."

Sam considered a minute — not the doctor but things.

"Miss Faith," he said, "I can run faster than you can walk, beyond all calculation. If you'll keep warm here, I'll run till I find a wagon — for if you don't ride and tell the story some one else will, — and then there's two people will be worse hurt than you are. You'd get home quickest so." Faith was about to speak but the doctor prevented her.

"Then you refuse to take care of my horses?" he said. "I told you I would take care of the lady."

"Bother the horses!" said Sam impatiently, — "who's to think about horses with Miss Faith here frightened to death? I'm ready to drive 'em all over creation, when I *get* ready, Dr. Harrison!"

Faith in her turn interposed.

"I would rather walk than wait, Dr. Harrison. If Sam knows some house near by, I would rather walk so far with him than wait for him to go and come again. We could send some one to help you then. Sam, you'll help Dr. Harrison get the horses up."

So much Sam was willing to do, and the doctor with such grace as he might, accepted; that is, with no grace at all. The horses with some trouble and difficulty were raised to their feet, and found whole. The carriage was broken too

much to be even drawn into town. Faith then set out with her escort.

"How far is your house, Sam?"

But Sam shook his head at that — the nearest one of any sort was a poor sort of a place, where they sometimes had a wagon standing and sometimes didn't. "But we can try, Miss Faith," he said in conclusion. Sam's arm was a strong one, and certainly if he could have induced his companion to lean her whole weight on it his satisfaction would have increased in proportion; as it was he gave her good help. And thus they had walked on, in the fading afternoon light, more than what to Faith was "just a little way," when the first house came in sight.

Fortunately the wagon was at home; and before it stood an old horse that one of the men said "he should like to see run!" — but for once such deficiency was the best recommendation. Another man set off on foot to find and help Dr. Harrison, and the owner of the slow horse gave the reins to Sam. The wagon was not on springs, and the buffalo skin was old, and the horse *was* slow! — beyond a question; but still it was easier than walking, and even quicker. Sam Stoutenburgh did his best to make Faith comfortable — levying upon various articles for that purpose, and drove along with a pleasure which after all can never be unmixed in this world! Even Sam felt that, for his long-drawn "Oh Miss Faith!" — said much, and carried Faith's thoughts (she hardly knew why) to more than one person at home.

"Sam," said Faith, "I don't want to say anything about this to-night."

"Well, ma'am — I won't say a word, if I can help it. Do you mean to *anybody*, Miss Faith?"

"Not to anybody. I mean, not to any one at home."

"I won't if I can help it," Sam repeated. "But it's my night to stay with Mr. Linden."

"Is it? — Well — what if it is?"

"I don't know —" said Sam dubiously, — "he has a funny way of reading people's faces."

"But what is going to be in yours, Sam?"

"I don't know that, neither," said Sam. "But the fact is, Miss Faith, he always *does* find out things — and if it's anything he's got to do with you may just as good tell him at once as to fuss round."

A pretty significant piece of information! Upon which Faith mused.

It was not so late when they reached Mr. Derrick's door, that the good lady's anxiety had got fairly under way. At that moment indeed, she had quitted the front of the house, and gone to hurry Cindy and the teakettle; so that Faith was in the house and her escort dismissed, before Mrs. Derrick appeared.

"Why pretty child!" she said — "here you are! I was very near getting worried. And I went up and asked Mr. Linden what time it was, lest the clock should'nt be right; but he seemed to think it wasn't worth while to fret about you yet. You're tired to death!" she added, looking at Faith. "You're as pale as anything, child!"

"Yes mother — I'm very tired."

And very glad to get home, she would have said, but her lips failed it.

"Well do sit down, child," said her mother, "and I'll take your things **up** stairs. Tea's all ready — that'll do you good, and then you shall go right to bed."

But that did not seem what Faith was ready to do; instead of that, she preferred to sit down by her mother, and wrap her arms round her again and lay her head in her mother's lap. Even then she did not sleep, though she was by no means inclined to talk and answered Mrs. Derrick's fond or anxious words with very few in return, low and quiet, or with quiet caresses. And when her mother was silent, to let her sleep, Faith was silent too.

They had sat so motionless for awhile, when Faith changed her posture. She got up, sat down on a chair by her mother's side, laid her head in her neck and wrapped arms round *her* in turn.

"Mother —" she said most caressingly, — "when will you begin to follow Christ with me? — I want that, — I want that!" —

CHAPTER XXV.

While Dr. Harrison was sleeping off the effects of his exertions, mental and physical, of the preceding day; and his horses in their stable realized that the reaping of wild oats has its own fatigues; Mrs. Derrick was stirring about with even unwonted activity, preparing for that unwonted breakfast up stairs. An anxious look or two at Faith's sleeping face had assured her mother that the fatigue there had been nothing very serious; and Mrs. Derrick went down with a glad heart to her preparations. There Faith joined her after awhile, and as breakfast time approached, Mrs. Derrick suggested that Faith should go up and see that the table was all right, and receive the breakfast which she herself would send up. Cindy was already there, passing back and forth, and the door stood open to facilitate her operations.

If Faith had felt curious as to the success of Sam Stoutenburgh's efforts at concealment, her curiosity was at once relieved. The room as she saw it through the half-open door was bright with firelight and sunshine; the spoons and cups on the little table shone cheerily in the glow; and all things were in their accustomed pretty order and disorder. But the couch was empty, and Mr. Linden stood by the mantelpiece, leaning one arm there, his face bent down and covered with his hand.

Faith had no need to knock — the door being open and Cindy in full possession; but as her light step came near the fire he turned suddenly and held out his hand to her without a word. Then gently pushing her back to the corner of the couch, Mr. Linden bade her "sit down and be quiet —" and he himself took a chair at her side. She could hardly tell how he looked — the face was so different from any she had ever seen him wear.

For a minute she obeyed orders; then she said, though with an eye that avoided meeting his,

"I mustn't be quiet, Mr. Linden — I must see to the breakfast table."

If his first motion was to hinder that, he thought better of it, and suffered her to go and give her finishing touches; watching her all the time, as she felt, but without speaking; and when Cindy shut the door and tramped down stairs, the room was very still. Only the light crackling of the hickory sticks in the chimney, and those soft movements about the table. If ever such movements were made with pleasure — if ever a face of very deep peacefulness hovered over the placing and displacing of knives and forks, plates and salt-cellars, — it was then. Yet it was not a very abstracted face, nor looked as if the *outward* quiet might be absolutely immovable. The last touch put to the table, Faith glanced at the hickory sticks on the fire; but they wanted nothing; and then her look came round to Mr. Linden, and the smile which could no longer be kept back, came too; a smile of touching acknowledgment.

"Miss Faith, will you come and sit down?"

She came, silently.

One deep breath she did hear, as Mr. Linden arranged the cushions and with gentle force made her lean against them, but either he did not feel himself able to touch directly what they were both thinking of — or else thought her not able to bear it. His tone was very quiet, the rest of his hand upon her hair hardly longer than it had been yesterday, as he said,

"What will my scholar be fit for to-day? — anything but sleep?"

For a moment it was a little more than she could bear, and her face for that moment was entirely grave; then she smiled up at him and answered in a tone lighter than his had been,

"Fit for anything — and more fit than ever, Mr. Linden. I only rest here because you put me here."

The next remark diverged a little, and was given with darkening eyes.

"How DARED he take you with those young horses!"

"He thought he could do just what he pleased with them —" said Faith, shaking her head a little.

"And with you —" was in Mr. Linden's mind, but it came not forth. "Where is your mother? — does she know?"

"Mother's coming," said Faith raising herself from the cushions, — "as soon as she sends up the breakfast. She doesn't know yet. I told Sam not to tell you, Mr. Linden."

"How do you do to-day?"

She answered him with a bright fair glance and in a tone as sweet as happiness could make it,

"*Very* well!"

Mr. Linden's eyes went from her to the opening door and the entering dishes.

"Sam was not in fault, Miss Faith, — I heard you come home."

In the train of the dishes came Mrs. Derrick, and looked with a little amaze at Mr. Linden off the couch and Faith upon it. But if the first didn't hurt him, she knew the second wouldn't hurt Faith, with whose appearance her mother was not yet quite satisfied. And when they were all at the table, Mrs. Derrick might wonder at those words of very earnest thanksgiving that they were all brought together again, but they needed no explanation to any one else. In all her life Faith had never known just such a breakfast. That sweet sense of being safe — of being shielded, — of breathing an atmosphere where no evil, mental, moral, or physical, could reach her, — how precious it was! — after those hours of fear and sorrow. If her two companions had visibly joined hands around her, she could not have felt the real fact more strongly. And another hand was nearer and more precious still to her apprehension; even the one that made theirs strong and had brought her within them. Faith's face was a fair picture, for all this was there. But Faith's words were few.

How many Mr. Linden's would have been, of choice, cannot

be known; for Mrs. Derrick's mind was so intent upon the last night's expedition, so eager to know how the poor woman was, and what she said, and where she lived; and how Faith enjoyed the drive, and what made her get so tired, — that he had full occupation in warding off the questions and turning them another way. In compliance with her wishes he had taken his usual place on the couch, and there made himself useful both with word and hand; the particular use of breakfast to him, was not so apparent.

It was over not a bit too soon; for Cindy had not finished the work of removing it before she brought up word that the doctor was come and wanted to see Mis' Derrick. Faith judged the enquiry was meant for herself and ran down stairs accordingly. The doctor was satisfied that she was none the worse of her ride with him, but had brought a very serious face to the examination.

"Have you forgiven me, Miss Derrick?"

"I have nothing to forgive, sir!" Faith told him with a look that gave sweet assurance of it. — "I am not hurt. I am very glad I went."

"May I say," said the doctor, and he looked as if he was uneasy till he had said it, — "that you misjudged me yesterday from that woman's words. I did not choose to interrupt her — and the severity of your remarks to me," he said with a little smile which did not want feeling, "took from me at the moment the power to justify myself. But Miss Derrick, I have not done what you seemed to suppose — and fairly enough, for *she* gave you to understand it. I never set myself to overthrow her belief in anything. I have hardly held any conversation with her, except what related to her physical condition; if I have said anything it has been a word intended to quiet her. I saw her mind was very much disturbed."

Faith had looked very grave, with eyes cast down, during the hearing of this speech. She raised them then, at the end, and said with great gentleness,

"There is but one way to give quiet that will stand, Dr. Harrison."

"I am sure you are right," he said looking at her with an unwonted face, nearer to reverence than Dr. Harrison was often known to give to anything. "I hope you will go and see that poor creature again and undo any mischief my careless words may have done."

"Won't you undo them yourself, Dr. Harrison?"

"I will endorse yours, so well as I can!" he said. "But won't you see her again?"

"If I can, — I will try to go."

"May I see Mr. Linden?" was the next question in a lighter tone; and receiving permission the doctor moved himself up stairs. He entered Mr. Linden's room with a quiet, composed air, very different from the jaunty manner of yesterday; and applied himself with business quiet to Mr. Linden's state and wants. And the reception he met was not one to set him a talking. It was not tinged with the various feelings which the *thought* of him had stirred in Mr. Linden's mind that night and morning, — if they lived still it was in the background. The grasp of his hand was firmer than usual, the tone more earnest, which said, "I am very glad to see you!" — and yet the doctor felt that in them both there was more — and also less — than mere personal feeling.

He had nearly finished the arrangements of Mr. Linden's arm when he remarked, "Did you hear the result of our expedition yesterday?"

A grave 'yes,' answered him.

"You see," said the doctor, "I couldn't manage the wind!"

But to that there was no reply.

"It was just that," said the doctor. "Those horses had been taking whiskey, I believe, instead of oats; and the wind just made them mad. They ran for pure love of running! — till a little villain threw up his hat at them — and then indeed it was which could catch the clouds first."

If the doctor wanted help in his account, he got none. He drew back and took a survey.

"What's the matter, Linden? — you look more severe at

me this morning than Miss Derrick does; — and I am sure she has the most reason."

"I have a prudent fit come over me once in a while," said Mr. Linden goodhumouredly, but with a little restless change of position. "I'm afraid if I talk much upon this subject I shall get out of patience — and I couldn't lay all the blame of that upon you."

"What blame — do you pretend — to lay upon me, as it is?" said the doctor not illhumouredly.

"There'll be no pretence about it — when I lay it on," said Mr. Linden.

"Enact Macduff — and lay on!" said the doctor smiling.

"Let it suffice you that I could if I would."

"The shadows of strokes suffice me!" said the doctor. "Am I a man of straw? Do you take me for Sir Andrew Aguecheek? 'horribly valiant' after his fashion. What have I done, man?" He stood, carelessly handsome and handsomely careless, before the couch, looking down upon Mr. Linden as if resolved to have something out of him.

A part of the description applied well to the face he was looking at — yet after a different fashion; and anything less careless than the look Mr. Linden bent upon him, could not be imagined. It was a look wherein again different feelings held each other in check, — the grave reproof, the sorrowful perception, the quick indignation — Dr. Harrison might detect them all; and yet more, the wistful desire that he were a different man. This it was that answered.

"What have you done, doctor? — you have very nearly given yourself full proof of those true things which you profess to disbelieve."

"How do you know that I disbelieve anything?" said the doctor, with a darkening yet an acute look; — "much more that I *profess* to disbelieve?"

"How do I know whether a ship carries a red or a blue light at her masthead?"

"You don't, if she carries no light at all; and I do not

remember that I ever professed myself in your hearing on either side of the 'things' I suppose you mean."

"What do you say of a ship that carries no light at all?"

"Must a ship *always* hang out her signals, man?"

"Ay —" said Mr. Linden, — "else she may run down the weaker craft, or be run down by the stronger."

"Suppose she don't know, in good truth, what light belongs to her?"

"It is safe to find out."

"Who has told you, Linden, that I believed or disbelieved anything?"

"Yourself."

"May I ask, if any other testimony has aided your judgment, or come in aid of it?"

"No," said Mr. Linden, looking at him with a grave, considering eye. "I am not much in the habit of discussing such points with third parties."

The doctor bit his lip; and then smiled.

"You're a good fellow, Linden. But you see, I can afford to say that now. I have you at advantage. As long as you lie there, and I am your attending physician — which latter I assure you I look upon as a piece of my good fortune — you *can't* knock me down, if you feel disposed. I am safe, and can afford to be generous. As to the lights," said the doctor taking up his hat, "I agree to what you say — and that's more of a concession than I ever made on the subject before. But in the atmosphere I have lived in, I do assure you I have not been able to tell the blue lights from the red!"

"I believe you," said Mr. Linden, — "nor was it altogether the fault of the atmosphere. Even where the colour is right, the glass is sometimes dim. What then?"

"What then? why the inference is plain. If one cannot be distinguished from the other, one is as good as the other!"

"And both shine with a steady clear light upon the heavenward way?"

"There's no question of shining," said the doctor half

scornfully, half impatiently. "If they shew colour at all, it is on a way that is murky enough, heaven knows!"

"Then what have they to do with the question?" said Mr. Linden, — "you are applying rules of action which you would laugh at in any other case. Does the multitude of quacks disgust you with the science of medicine? — does the dim burning of a dozen poor candles hinder your lighting a good one? You have nothing to do with other people's lights, — let your own shine!"

Dr. Harrison stood looking at his adviser a minute, with a smile that was both pleased and acute.

"Linden" — said he, — "it strikes me that you are out of your vocation."

"When I heard that account last night," — Mr. Linden went on — and he paused, as if the recollection were painful, — "the second thing I thought of was your own words, that heaven 'is not in your line.'"

"Well? —" said the doctor swinging his hat and beginning to pace up and down the room, and speaking as if at once confessing and justifying the charge laid to him, — "Now and then, I believe, a bodily angel comes down to the earth and leaves her wings behind her — but that's not humanity, Linden!"

"True servant of God, is as fair a name as angel," said Mr. Linden; "and that is what humanity may be and often is. 'Though crowns are wanting, and bright pinions folded.'"

"I don't know —" said the doctor. "I shouldn't have wondered any minute yesterday to see the pinions unfold before me." Which remark was received in silence.

"If such an angel were to take hold of me," the doctor went on meditatively, — "I believe she might make me and carry me whither she would. But I wonder if I shall be forbid the house now!" — He stopped and looked at Mr. Linden with a face of comic enquiry.

"You may come and see *me*," said Mr. Linden, with comforting assurance.

"Do you think I may?" said the doctor. He sat down

and threw his hat on the floor. — "What shall I do with Mrs. Derrick? She will want to send me off in a balloon, on some air journey that will never land me on earth! — or find some other vanishing medium most prompt and irrevocable — all as a penalty for my having ventured to leap a fence in company with her daughter!"

But the prudent fit had perhaps come back upon Mr. Linden, for except a sudden illumination of eye and face, the doctor's speech called forth no opinion.

"The best driver on earth can't be a centaur, man! Horses in these days will have heads of their own." But then the doctor rose up and came gracefully and gravely again to take his friend and patient's hand.

"I agree to all you say!" said he, looking down with a goodhumoured wilful expression to Mr. Linden's face; — "and I know no other man to whom I would own as much, after such words and such *silence* as you have bestowed on me. Good-bye. But really, remember, a man is not answerable for all his horses — or all his wits — may do."

The doctor went; and then there was an interval of some length. Faith had found several things to do in her down stairs department, which she would not leave to her mother; especially after the shock Mrs. Derrick's mind and heart had received from the communication of what had happened the day before. So it was a little later than usual when the light tap was heard at Mr. Linden's door and Faith and a cup of cocoa came in. She set the cup down, and then went out again for a dish of grapes and pears — Judge Harrison's and Farmer David's sending — which she brought to the table.

"I didn't know which you would like best, Mr. Linden; — so I brought both."

"I should like to be waiting on you," he said, — "Miss Faith, you ought not to be waiting on me. I shall bestir myself and come down stairs."

There was expression in the kind of happy silence that answered him, as she offered the cocoa.

"I don't know where to begin to talk to you this morning,"

said Mr. Linden, — "everything demands the first place. Miss Faith, when you feel that you can, will you tell me all about yesterday? I wish I could give you this couch again, but I suppose in prudence I ought to lie still."

She saw him served with what he would have; then sat down, and a shadow of sweet gravity came over her.

"The ride out was all very pleasant. There wasn't much talk, and I could just enjoy everything. It's a long way, Mr. Linden," she said glancing at him — she spoke generally with her eyes bent somewhere else; — "it must be ten or twelve miles, for we went very fast; and it was beautiful, with the wind and the driving clouds and shadows. So I enjoyed all that part, and wasn't afraid of the horses, or not much afraid — though they went *very* fast and I saw they felt very gay. I liked the going fast and I thought the doctor could manage them." She paused.

"Are you sure you want to talk of this now?" Mr. Linden said. "You know we have other things to do — this can wait till you choose."

"I like to tell it," she said with another quick glance and a quick breath, — "but the visit comes next — and I don't know how to tell you of that. Mr. Linden, I wish you could see that woman! — And if you can't soon, I must, — somehow."

"If I can't — or if I can, I will find you the 'somehow,' if you want to go. And if you will let me," he added. "Is she really dying?"

"She says so —" Faith said low. And was silent a bit.

"Then we set out to come home, and all went very well till we were half way on the road; but then the horses seemed to grow more frisky than ever — I think the wind excited them; and Dr. Harrison had his hands full, I could see, to hold them in, especially after we turned Lamprey's corner and the wind was in their faces. I think it was something suddenly flung over the fence, that started them off to run — and then they ran faster and faster, and reins and bits were of no use at all."

Faith was excited herself, and spoke slowly and low and with hindered breath.

"I saw they were getting more and more furious, — and there were a few minutes, Mr. Linden, when I thought I should maybe never see home again. — And then I thanked you in my heart."

"*Me?*" he said with quick emphasis, and looking at her.

Faith did not look at him, but after a pause went on very quietly.

"I mean, on earth I thanked you. The end of it was, they took a new fright at something, I believe, just at the top of a hill; and after that it was all a whirl. I hardly knew anything — till I found myself lying on the ground in the meadow. The horses had jumped the carriage and all clean over the fence. The fence was just below the foot of the hill; the road took a turn there. — Sam told you the rest — didn't he, Mr. Linden?"

He said "yes," and not another word, but lay there still with those closely shielded eyes; and lips unbent from their usual repose, with grave humbleness and grief and joy. The silence lasted till Faith spoke again. And that was some little space of time. A shade graver and lower her tone was when she spoke.

"I shall never forget after this, that it is 'part of a Christian's sailing-orders to speak every vessel he meets.' — I think I shall never forget it again."

Mr. Linden did look then at the little craft that had begun her voyage so undauntedly under the Christian colours, though what he thought of her he said not; apparently his own words were not yet ready, though he spoke.

"'Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'"

Faith spoke no more. She sat in the absolutest quiet, of face and figure both; looking into the fire that played in the chimney, with a fixedness that perhaps told — in the beginning — of some doubtfulness of self command. But the happy look of the face was in nowise changed.

A knock at the door was the first interruption, a knock so low down that the latch seemed quite too high to match it; but by some exercise of skill this was lifted, and Johnny Fax presented himself. He looked very wide awake, and smiling, and demure, as was his wont, though to-day the smiles were in the ascendant; owing perhaps to the weest of all wee baskets which he held in his hand. Coming close up to Mr. Linden, and giving him the privileged caress, Johnny stood there within his arm and smiled benignly upon Faith, as if he considered her quite part and parcel of the same concern. Who smiled back upon him, and enquired "where he had come from?"

Johnny said "From home, ma'am," and looked down at his tiny basket as if it were a weight on his mind that he did not know how to get rid of.

"Johnny," said Mr. Linden, "what have you got in that basket?"

"You couldn't guess!" said Johnny with a very bright face.

"I couldn't guess!" said Mr. Linden. "Don't you suppose I can do anything?"

"Yes —" said Johnny shaking his head, — "but you can't do that."

"Then I shall not try," said Mr. Linden, "and you'll have to tell me."

Johnny put his face close down by Mr. Linden, and whispered, but not so low that Faith could not hear —

"It's two white eggs that my black hen laid for you, sir!"

"Well I never should have guessed that!" — said Mr. Linden smiling. "I didn't suppose there was a hen in the world that cared so much for me. I don't believe she would if she was not *your* hen, Johnny." — Which last sentence Johnny understood just well enough to feel delighted; and stood with a glad little face while his teacher opened the basket, and taking up first one egg and then the other, commented upon their size and whiteness.

"As soon as I can get out I shall come and see that hen,"

said Mr. Linden, drawing the child closer and giving him another kiss — which Johnny thought was worth a whole basket of eggs; — "so you must tell her to have her feathers in good order. Now what have you to say to Miss Faith?"

"O *she* talks to *me*," said Johnny.

"Does she?" said Mr. Linden, — "is that the division of labour? What does she talk about, Johnny? — let me see how well you remember." It was said with a little acknowledging look that he was asking that to which somebody would demur — but also with a wilful assumption that somebody would come to no harm. So though Faith flushed and started, she sat back in her seat again without making any word interposition. Johnny stood and thought — for he was a real little literalist.

"She talked about heaven — " he said slowly, — "and how to get there, — and said she was going — and we must too. That's what she said Sunday. And at Judge Harrison's she said she was glad I'd got a red ribband — and down to Neanticut she told me to run away."

"I'm sure that was a gentle way of dismissing you," said Mr. Linden, stroking the child's forehead. "Well Johnny — are you trying to follow her in that way to heaven she told you of?"

The "yes" was given without hesitation, and came with strangely sweet effect from those childish lips. Then after a minute Johnny added, as if he feared some misunderstanding,

"It's the same way you told me, sir."

"Yes, I trust you will see me there too," Mr. Linden said, with a rather moved look at the little face before him.

What made Faith, at those last words of Johnny's, jump up and spring to the fire? And after a most elaborate handling of the sticks of wood, she did not come back to her seat, but stood still with her back turned to the couch and the little witness who was testifying there. He was not called upon for any more evidence, however. Mr. Linden talked — or let him talk — about various important things in Johnny's daily

life and experience, and gave a promise that he himself would be at school as soon as the doctor gave his permission.

Mrs. Derrick's soft knock and entrance came now, she herself looking in good truth as if a "tear-storm" had passed over her. But she brightened up a little at the sight of Faith.

"Pretty child!" she said, coming up to her, "and so you're here? I couldn't rest any longer without seeing just where you were."

Faith put one hand on her shoulder as she stood, and then clasped the other upon that.

"Pretty child!" her mother repeated, in a tone that spoke more of pain than pleasure — and Faith could feel the shudder that passed over her then. But she controlled herself. "Do you know it's dinner time, Faith? How is Mr. Linden?"

"There he is," said Faith smiling. "I don't know, mother."

"He don't look to me as if he had ever been asleep," said Mrs. Derrick, — but whether that shewed want of sleep, or the reverse, was, as Mr. Linden remarked, quite doubtful.

Mrs. Derrick looked at him, met his smile — then her whole heart answered to something it said.

"Oh Mr. Linden! think of her being in such danger!" and there was a minute of deep silence.

"Nay!" he answered softly — and the face was beautiful in its changing expression, — "think of her being so safe!"

Mrs. Derrick could bear neither word nor look after that. The two ladies went down together, leaving Johnny to dine with his teacher.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The dinner up stairs was a very quiet and uninterrupted one. The dinner down stairs was destined not to be so.

The first break was the entrance of Cindy with a bunch of flowers — which the doctor had sent to Miss Derrick, with

the desire to know how she was. Faith received the flowers with a dubious face and put them in water on the dinner-table, where they looked splendid. Mrs. Derrick could hardly see their splendour.

"He needn't think to come round *me* that way," she said. "Child! I wouldn't let you go off with him again for twenty kingdoms!"

"Not with those horses, mother."

"Nor with any others. I sha'n't ever want to have you go with anybody again, Faith."

"What's goin' on here?" said a growling voice which they knew, before Mr. Simlins entered the door of the dining room. "That gal o' yourn wants me to stay politely in the parlour yonder — but I ain't polite — and I come to see you, not your doors and windows nor the pretty paper on your walls. What are you all about, Mrs. Derrick? I hear the very spirit of turbidness has got into this house!"

"There's not much spirit in me to-day," said Mrs. Derrick, "nor spirits neither. I've lost what little I had. Anybody could knock me down with a straw. Sit down, Mr. Simlins, and take some dinner."

"I'm afeard, if it's done so easy, I might occasionally do it with one o' them posies," said Mr. Simlins standing and surveying the bouquet as if he didn't know what to make of it. "Do you eat the grass of the field at your noonspell?"

"You may ask Faith," said Mrs. Derrick; "she put 'em there."

"Sit down, Mr. Simlins," said Faith.

"*I* ain't goin' to sit down! I've eat *my* dinner. I've just come in, Mrs. Derrick, to see if you're all overturned, or if there's anything left straight yet."

"It's *all* straight," said Faith smiling up at him. "Sit down, Mr. Simlins."

"What's the truth of it, Mrs. Derrick? This child ain't all straight, is she?"

It followed that, bit by bit, Mr. Simlins got out the story

of the accident, for neither Faith nor Mrs. Derrick was forward to speak about it. He then enquired, with an unsatisfied grunt, why Faith was "postin' round with Dr. Harrison?" Whereat Mrs. Derrick felt justly indignant.

"Why she ain't! Mr. Simlins. She went down there on business, and there was nobody else at hand to take her just then."

"What do you call bein' at hand?" said Mr. Simlins. "I've got two hands, and more'n two horses — that won't run away neither. It's only my cows do that! — Where's Mr. Linden?"

"O he's up stairs —" said Mrs. Derrick. "He's not been down yet. Faith, don't you think he's some stronger to-day?"

"And so," said Mr. Simlins turning to her again reproachfully, — "while he's lyin' up there and can't stir, you go drivin' over the country with 'tother one!"

But that brought out Faith's round low laugh, so incontrovertibly merry and musical that it changed Mr. Simlins' face on the instant. It came to an end almost as soon, but short as it was it was better than the warble of any nightingale; inasmuch as the music of a good sound human heart is worth all the birds in creation.

"When's Mr. Linden going to be down stairs, where a body can get sight of him?"

"The doctor says he mustn't go out for a long time yet," said Mrs. Derrick. "When are you going to find the man that shot him? — that's what *I* want to know."

"When I get a composition from the only witness," Mr. Simlins answered. "And as the witness ain't particular about testifying, I'm afeard it'll be a spell o' time yet. It'll come out. *I* should think the fellow'd ha' made tracks, fust thing; but I 'aint heerd of any one's bein' missin' from town, — except —"

Mr. Simlins suddenly started, stopped, and gazed at Faith with a most extraordinary expression.

"Did you look at my flowers, Mr. Simlins?" said Faith quite quietly, though without meeting his eye.

"I've seen nosegays afore," growled Mr. Simlins in a very uninterested manner. "I don't see as this is no more nor less than a nosegay. Do you s'pose I might go up and see somebody up stairs for two minutes, without creating any confusion?"

Mr. Simlins went up and shortly afterwards went away. But if Faith anticipated a good long lesson that afternoon, to make up for the morning and afternoon in which she had had none — albeit the morning had been better than lessons — she was to be disappointed. Hardly was the dinner over, and the muffins mixed which she was determined should make amends for Mr. Linden's poor breakfast, when Miss Harrison came; full of sorrow, and sympathy, and hope.

"Faith don't look a bit the worse, ma'am," she said to Mrs. Derrick.

"She couldn't look any way but just so," her mother said with a fond glance.

"Why she *could* look pale, but I don't see that she does even that; — unless, perhaps, just such a *tingy* paleness as is rather becoming than otherwise. Dear Mrs. Derrick, I hope you have forgiven Julius?"

It was a sorrowful smile that met her words, and eyes that grew dim and looked away.

"I suppose I could forgive the whole world — since he didn't do any more harm," Mrs. Derrick said with her wonted gentleness. "But I wouldn't see her go with him again, Miss Sophy — if that's what you call forgiveness."

"Why not? Dear Mrs. Derrick!" —

"Why not?" — said the good lady — "why Faith's used to being taken care of, Miss Sophy — and I'm used to seeing it."

"My dear Mrs. Derrick!" — Miss Harrison exclaimed out of breath, — "do you think she was not taken care of? Julius knows his horses, and he is a capital hand with them; he says himself he thinks he should have brought them to, if that little wretch of a boy hadn't thrown up his hat before their eyes. No horses would stand that, you know. And the best man in the

world, and the best driver, can't be *certain* of his horses, Mrs. Derrick. Not take care of her! —"

"I don't mean to say that he didn't mean to," said Mrs. Derrick quietly, "but I don't think he knows how. You needn't look so, Miss Sophy — I'm not saying a word against your brother. But Faith's only part of the world to him — and she's the whole of it to me. He should have taken horses he *was* sure of," said Mrs. Derrick with a little flush on her cheek.

"I don't know," said Miss Harrison softly, and looking at Faith, — "I don't know just what part of the world she is to him — but I think, and am very sure, he would have thrown himself out rather than her. Can anybody do more? Can any *man* do more, Mrs. Derrick?" she said smiling. "I know you are her mother; and though I am not her mother, I think of her just as you do."

"I can't say what any man can do," said Mrs. Derrick pleasantly, — "I haven't tried many. And you can't tell how I feel, Miss Sophy — it isn't cross, if it sounds so. How long has Dr. Harrison had those horses?"

"Why, not very long," said Miss Harrison, — "he hasn't been home long himself. But he's a good judge of horses," she said, a little less sure of her ground than in the former part of the conversation. Perhaps she was not sorry to have it interrupted.

"My dear Mrs. Derrick!" said Mr. Somers entering, — "I have come to congratulate you! Miss Harrison, I see, is before me in this pleasant — a — office. Miss Faith! — I am glad to see you looking so well after your overthrow." — Mr. Somers went round shaking hands as he spoke. — "Mrs. Somers will be here presently to join me — she stopped a few minutes by the way. Mrs. Somers always has more business on hand than I can — a — keep up with. Mrs. Derrick, I have rejoiced with you, indeed, ma'am."

Mrs. Somers had managed to keep up with her business and him too, for she came in before Mr. Somers had well taken the measure of his chair. She walked up to Faith and kissed

her, with a sort of glad energy, gave her a comprehensive glance from head to foot, and then turned to Mrs. Derrick with,

"There's nothing amiss with *her*, after all. — Sophy, what excuses have you brought in your bag? — it seems to be full."

"I wish you'd make some for Julius, aunt Ellen — I can see Mrs. Derrick has only half forgiven him."

"Has she got so far as that?" said Mrs. Somers.

"I don't know. Faith, *you* might come and say something — you know if it isn't true; and Mrs. Derrick will hear you."

Faith was busy giving Mrs. Somers a chair, and certainly looked as if *she* had nobody to forgive anything in the wide world.

"What do you want me to say, Sophy?"

"Why, that Julius wasn't to blame."

"I find it is still a disputed point, whether a man has a right to break his own neck," said Mrs. Somers. "I think he hasn't, myself, but most people don't agree with me. Mr. Somers thinks people may run away alone or together, just as they've a mind. I don't know whether it's the fees or the freedom that takes his fancy."

"I suppose, my dear," said Mr. Somers, "a man may lawfully set out to take a ride without intending to break his own neck, or anybody else's; and find it done at the end, without blame to himself. I never was, I hope, a promoter of — ha! — flighty marriages — to which you seem to allude."

"If he finds it done at the end, it isn't done very thoroughly," said Mrs. Somers. "But Pattaquasset's growing up into a novel — last week furnished with a hero, and this week with a heroine, — the course of things can't run smooth now. So we may all look out for breakers — of horses, I hope, among other things."

"Oh aunt Ellen!" — was Miss Harrison's not gratified comment on this speech.

"I hope Mrs. Somers don't mean that we are to look out for breakers of hearts, among the other things," said Mr. Somers.

"Look out for them? to be sure!" said Miss Harrison; — "always and everywhere. What would the world be without them?"

"The world would not be heart-broken," said Mrs. Somers. "Faith — which of you came to first? who picked you up?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Somers. Sam Stoutenburgh was passing just at the time and Dr. Harrison called him. — I don't know who picked me up."

"Sam Stoutenburgh!" said Mrs. Somers, — "well, he's made, if nobody else is! He'll bless Julius for the rest of his life for giving him such a chance. Do you know how that boy watches you, Faith? — I mean to speak to Mr. Linden about it the very first time I see him."

Something in this speech called forth Faith's colour. She had spoken Sam's name herself with the simplest unchanging face; but now the flushes came and came abundantly.

"I don't know what good that would do, Mrs. Somers."

"Nor I — till I try," said the lady smiling at her. "But if the mere suggestion is so powerful, what may not the reality do? I'll say one thing for Mr. Linden — he makes all those boys come into church and get seated before the service begins — which nobody else ever did yet; if they ever tried. I was curious to see how it would be last Sunday when he wasn't there — but they were more punctual than ever. It's quite a comfort — if there's anything I do hate to see, it's a troop of men and boys outside the door when they ought to be in. What are you afraid he'll say to Sam, Faith?"

Faith's eyes were looking down. The question brought them up, and then her smile was as frank as her blushes had been. "I am not afraid he'll say anything, Mrs. Somers."

"I don't know why he should, my dear," said Mr. Somers. "We all like to use our eyes — you can't very well blame a boy."

"O Mr. Somers!" said his wife — with that air which a woman puts on when she says she believes, what she wouldn't for the world say *if* she believed, — "of course you think that! Don't I know how you broke your heart after a green veil

when you were in college? I don't think it's been right whole since. Now I have some feeling for Sam — or his future wife."

"Well Mrs. Derrick, what shall I tell Julius?" said Miss Harrison as she rose to go.

"Tell him?" said Mrs. Derrick enquiringly. "He wouldn't care to hear anything about me, if you did tell him, Miss Sophy."

"Well! — he'll have to come and talk to you himself," said Miss Harrison. "Faith, stand up for the right."

Faith went to the door with her and returned ushering in a new-comer, even the wife of Farmer Davids.

"Husband wanted me to come and see how Mr. Linden was," she said in meek explanation of her appearance. "He would have come hisself, but he was forced to be in the field, and he said he wisht I'd come myself. How is he, ma'am?"

"I hope he's better," — said Mrs. Derrick, giving her new visiter a kind reception and a seat. "He don't get strong very fast. How are you all at home, Mrs. Davids?"

"We're considerable comfortable, ma'am," said Mrs. Davids taking the chair in an unobtrusive spirit. "I am happy to have the occasion to make your acquaintance better. Husband would have come hisself, only he couldn't. Mr. Linden don't get strong?"

"Not very fast," said Mrs. Derrick. "I don't know just when the doctor 'll let him go to school again. I suppose you're anxious about Phil, Mrs. Davids. But all the boys have to be out, now."

"Yes ma'am, we're anxious — and husband is anxious about Mr. Linden, and he sent me to know. But there is such a change in Phil, ma'am," — she said turning to Mrs. Somers, — "such a change, you wouldn't believe! he never would go to school before — not regular — not for nobody — not for his father, nor for me; and it was mor'n my life was worth. My husband, he said it was my fault; but I don't know how 'twas! And now sir, he d'n't want a word spoke to him! he's off before it's time in the morning — and he learns too, for I catch him at it; and my husband don't think anything in the world

is too good for Mr. Linden; nor of course, I s'pose, I don't But however he's managed or overcome it, to make Phil draw in harness, *I* don't know, and husband says he don't. And ma'am, was those pears good? or what *does* Mr. Linden like? If it's on the farm he'll get it."

It would have taken more conversational skill than Mrs. Derrick possessed, to give a summary answer to all this; but her simplicity answered as well, after all.

"I guess he'll like what you've been saying better than anything, Mrs. Davids; I'll tell him."

"Do," said Mrs. Davids. "I wisht you would. Husband would have said it completer. He thinks ma'am," (turning to Mrs. Somers again) "that Mr. Linden is a wonderful man! And I'm of the opinion he's handsome."

Faith had been sitting, quiet and demure, for some time past, hearing what was going on; but this last sentence drove her to the right about like lightning. She found something to do in another part of the room.

"Did you ever hear anybody say he wasn't?" said Mrs. Somers. "Mr. Somers, it's time we were going. Ah — there's Squire Stoutenburgh! Faith — come here!"

And Squire Stoutenburgh, appearing in the doorway like the worthy father of his stout son, bowed to the company.

"Well Mrs. Derrick—" he said,—"good day Mr. Somers — *and* Mrs. Somers! I beg pardon — Well Miss Faith! I'm glad it is well, I'm sure. My dear, how do you do?"

"Why very well, sir!" said Faith.

"Why so it is!" said Squire Stoutenburgh taking hold of both her hands and looking at her. "Sam said you were as pale as a ghost when he carried you down to the spring — but Sam don't always see straight when he's excited. You needn't be frightened if I kiss you, my dear — you know I always do, and always have — since you were a year old," said the Squire as he took his wonted privilege.

Faith gravely submitted, not letting the Squire however get any further than her cheek; which ought to have contented him.

"Sam was very good to me yesterday, sir," she answered.

"I think, Squire," said Mr. Somers, "your son was — a — in luck, as we say. A fortunate chance! What most people would have thought no — a — disagreeable office."

"Sam's a good boy—" said his father, — "a very good boy — always was. He does crow a little over Dr. Harrison, I must say. But what shall we do with the doctor, Mr. Somers? — what does he deserve for running away with our Pattaquasset roses and turning them into meadow lilies? Yes, yes, Miss Faith — you may look as pink as you please now — it won't help the matter. What shall we do with him, sir? My dear," said Squire Stoutenburgh seating Faith by his side and dropping his voice, you're growing wonderfully like your father!"

A changed, sweet glance of Faith's eyes answered him.

"Yes!" — the Squire repeated meditatively and looking at her. — "Ah he was a fine man! I used to think he couldn't be better — but I s'pose he is now. My dear, you needn't wonder when I tell you that I thought more of your mother last night than I did of you. But you don't remember all about that. Well — I shall go home and tell Mrs. Stoutenburgh that you're as pretty as a posie, and then she won't care what else is the matter," he said, getting up again. "Mrs. Somers, I see the parson durstn't say a word about Dr. Harrison before you."

"I — I declare I don't think Dr. Harrison is very much to be blamed, Squire," said the parson thus called upon. "And Mrs. Somers is so well able to speak for herself — I have no doubt, Squire Stoutenburgh, if it wasn't for Mrs. Somers, — I dare say I might like to do as much as the doctor did, myself!"

"Bless my life!" said Squire Stoutenburgh, "I can't stay to be a party to confidences of that sort! — I must go! —" and he departed, laughing and followed by the two others.

But even as they went, Faith, who with her mother had accompanied them to the door, was electrified somewhat doubtfully at the vision of Miss Deacon just within the gate.

Miss Cecilia came forward, also with some doubt upon her spirit, to judge by her air. But Faith's greeting of her was so pleasant and kind, though she could not prevent its being grave, that the young lady evidently took heart. Being reassured, she sat and talked at leisure, and at length, using her eyes as well as her tongue; thus making herself mistress of all the truth she could get at, and of some more. She was thorough in her investigations as to all the drama of the last seven days, and all and each of the actors therein; and at the close of her visit declared that "Sam had been a great fool to go away, and that she had told him so before"; and departed at last with her head full of Dr. Harrison.

But detentions were not over. Miss Bezac came before Miss Deacon was quit of the parlour; and before Miss Bezac had been two minutes there, other members of the Pattaquasset community came pouring in. Everybody must see Faith, hear particulars, discuss realities and possibilities of the accident, and know how Mr. Linden was getting along. The hours of the afternoon waned away; but people came as people went; and it was not till long shadows and slant sunbeams began to give note of supper time, that the influx lessened and the friends gathered in Mrs. Derrick's parlour began to drop away without others stepping in to take their place.

"Faith," said her mother when they were at last alone, "I can't bear this any longer! I shall go crazy if I hear that story one other time to-night!" And she put her arms round Faith, and leaned her head wearily on her shoulder. "I'll sit up to tea," she went on presently, "and then if the rest of the town comes, you'll have to see 'em — for I can't!"

Faith gently put her into a chair and holding her in her arms stooped over her. "Mother" — the words were as soft as the kisses which came between, — "you mustn't mind it so much. Sit up to tea! Why I have made some of the best muffins that ever were seen."

"Child!" said her mother in a low voice, "I felt this morning as if I had been as near death as you had!" — and

if the words needed any emphasis, they had it in the way Mrs. Derrick leaned her head against Faith and was silent. But not for long. She got up, and kissing Faith two or three times, said, "My pretty child!" in a tone that indeed told of possible heartbreak; and then half holding her, half held by her, drew her on into the tea-room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It so happened that the first griddleful of muffins did not do credit to their raising — (or to their bringing up, elegant reader!) — therefore Mr. Linden's teatray waited for the second. Of course the other tea waited too. Mrs. Derrick walked out into the kitchen to see *what* was the matter with the griddle; Faith discovered that one spoon on the tray looked dull, and went to the spoonbasket to change it. Thus occupied, and giving little reprehensive glances at the spoons generally, and mental admonitions to Cindy, with the open closet door half screening her from the rest of the room, she was startled — not by the opening of another door, but by these words, —

"Miss Faith, shall I carry this tray upstairs?"

To this day it is uncertain what sort of a spoon Faith brought back! — or indeed whether she brought any at all. There was one flash of gladness in her cheek and her eye, with the exclamation, "Mr. Linden!" — then she came from the closet just her old little self.

"Are you well enough to be down stairs, sir?"

"In whose estimation, ma'am?"

"Because if you are, Mr. Linden," she said with a face of laughing pleasure, "won't you please come into the other room?"

"I think not," he said, laughing a little too, — if the exertion of coming down had made him pale, the pleasure partly concealed it. "I will take a chair here, if you please. Am I alone, of all Pattaquasset, to be forbidden to pay my respects to you to-night? Miss Faith, how do you do?"

"I am very well. But Mr. Linden, if you will please come into the other room, there is an easy chair there. Please do! this room is cold, for the fire got down while we were seeing people."

She led the way as she spoke, without waiting for another denial; pushed the table and a great chair of state, or of ease, in the sitting-room, into closer neighbourhood; and renewed the brilliancy of the fire. Then lit up the lamp and cleared books away from the table; all done with quick alacrity.

"That will do almost as well as the couch, won't it?" she said; and then repeated in gentler tones her question, "Are you well enough to be down, Mr. Linden?"

"I don't know, Miss Faith! — I am well enough to want to be down. How can you let the charms of society divert your mind from your books for a whole afternoon? Have you been so studious for the last few days only because you had nothing else to do?"

She laughed at the question, and went off, leaving Mr. Linden in a region of comfort. More comfort came soon in the shape of the teatray, borne by Cindy; then Mrs. Derrick; and lastly Faith herself appeared — bearing a plate of the muffins, perfect this time, and delicate as they had need to be for a delicate appetite. Mr. Linden was presently served with one of these and a cup of smoking tea; and Faith thought, and her look half said it, that being down stairs would do him no harm. Certainly the surprise and pleasure of such company to tea did Mrs. Derrick good, whoever else missed it; though it is presumable no one did. The pleasant sighing of the wind round the house and in the chimney (it sighed alone for that evening) the sparkling of the fire, the singing of the maple or hickory sticks, the comfortable atmosphere of tea and muffins diffused, like the firelight, all through the room; gave as fair an assemblage of creature comforts as need be wished; and the atmosphere of talk was as bright, and savoury, and glowing too, in its way; though the way was quiet. Mr. Linden amused himself (and Faith)

by giving her little lessons in the way she would have to talk in those French "noonspells" she had in prospect: making Mrs. Derrick laugh with the queer sounding words and sentences, and keeping Faith interested to that point, that if he had not attended to her tea as well, she would scarce have got any.

"I shall not be hard upon you at first," he said smiling, — "when I see you sitting in silent despair because you want something at my end of the table, I will help you out with a 'que voulez-vous, mademoiselle?' and perhaps with a 'voulez-vous?' this or that. But after a week or two, Miss Faith, if you go without any dinner, it will not move me in the least."

Faith looked as if she would gladly forego her dinner to escape the French asking for it, and yet not quite so neither. But this ordeal was more terrible to her by far than all the rest; she could face them, indeed, they had ceased to be anything but pleasure — or pleasure with a spice that enhanced it; but at this she trembled. To the above speech — or threat, — she simply answered,

"I shall be so glad to see you come home to tea, Mr. Linden!"

"And so glad to see me go away from dinner!"

"I didn't say that."

"You will—" said Mr. Linden, — "I can imagine you falling back in your chair and exclaiming, 'Ah, quand voulez-vous partir, monsieur!' — which of course will make it extremely difficult for me to remain a moment longer."

"I don't think you can imagine me doing it," said Faith laughing. "I can't imagine myself."

"That proves nothing. Only don't ever say to me, 'Monsieur! partez à l'instant!' — because —"

"Because what, Mr. Linden?" said Faith seriously.

"Because we might disagree upon that point," he said with rather a demure arch of his eyebrows. Faith's full silver rang out, softly.

"You see!" she said. "It's beginning already. I don't know in the least what you are talking about!"

"No — you do not," was the laughing reply. "But Miss Faith, if I am kept at home long enough, and society keeps at home too, instead of coming between us and our exercises, those conversations will seem less terrible by the time they begin. I should certainly get you a pocket dictionary, but I prefer to be that myself. How far can you ride on horseback at once?"

"On horseback?" said Faith, much as if those words had been also French, or an algebraical puzzle.

"That was what I said."

"I know that was what you said — I didn't know what you meant, Mr. Linden. I have never been really on horseback but a few times in my life — then I rode a few miles — I don't know exactly how many."

"I wonder people don't do it more" — said Mrs. Derrick. "When I was a girl that was the common way of getting about; and nobody ever got thrown, neither."

"Wouldn't that be the pleasantest way of getting to Mattabeeset?" said Mr. Linden.

An illumination answered him first; then "Oh, yes!"

"I want you to see what is to be seen over there," he said, — "shall we go some day, if I get well enough before cold weather?"

Faith's quiet words of agreeing to this proposal were declared to be a sham by her eyes, cheeks, lips and brow, every one of which was giving testimony after a different fashion.

At this moment the door opened. It happened that Dr. Harrison had encountered Cindy at the hall door, where she was either loitering to catch snatches of indoor conversation, or waiting to entrap Jem Waters. But there she was, and being asked for Mr. Linden replied that he was down stairs, and without more ceremony ushered the doctor in; and entering the whole view lay before him in its freshness. Mrs. Derrick, complacent and comfortable, sat behind the no-

longer-wanted tea-tray, listening and playing with a spoon. Faith's face, though considering her unfinished muffin, was brilliant with rosy pleasure; while the fire which she had for some time forgotten to mend, lay in a state of powerful inaction, a mass of living coals and smoking brands. In the glow of that stood the easy chair, and therein Mr. Linden, although with the air and attitude of one wanting both rest and strength, was considering with rather unbent lips no less a subject than — One and Somewhat! — further the doctor's eyes could not read. The precise direction of those other eyes was shaded. The doctor came up and stood beside them.

"Did I order you to stay up stairs?" he said in soft, measured syllables, without having spoken to anybody else.

"Good evening, doctor!" said Mr. Linden offering his hand. "As I meet you half way, please excuse me for keeping my seat."

From that hand, the doctor passed to Faith's; which was taken and held, just enough to say all he wished to say; which, be it remarked in passing, was a good deal.

"May I approach Mrs. Derrick?" said he then, turning round to Mr. Linden with a cool, funny, careless, yet good-humoured, doubt upon his face.

"What is the present state of your nerves?"

"Depending upon your answer, of course! — which the ordinary rules of society forbid me to wait for. Madam! — are you in sufficient charity with me to give me a cup of tea?"

"Yes, doctor — if the tea's good enough," said Mrs. Derrick with her usual quietness. "And if it isn't I'll have some more." So saying she got up and went towards the kitchen to call Cindy. The doctor skilfully intercepted this movement, placing himself in her way.

"May I ask, where you are going?" he said with a sort of gentle kindliness he did not always put on.

"Why to get some tea that's fit to give you, doctor. I don't think this is."

"Will you give me something else?"

"I'll give you that first," said Mrs. Derrick — "I'll see

about the rest." And passing out into the kitchen she gave her orders about the teapot, and a quiet little injunction to Faith to go in and sit down.

"Mother, you're tired," said Faith. "Let me see about the tea!"

"I guess I will!" said Mrs. Derrick. "I'm not going to have the house stand up on one end just because Dr. Harrison wants his tea. You go off, pretty childd, — if you stay here he'll think you're baking muffins for him, and I don't choose he should."

"Why I would do it, mother," said Faith. She went off, however, into the other room and sat down gravely, quite the other side of the fireplace from the tea-table. Dr. Harrison was standing on the rug with his back to the fire, and followed her with his eye.

"How do you do?" he said in a softened voice, stepping a step nearer to her. She looked up and gave him a frank and kind "very well!"

Was it altogether professional, the way in which he took up her hand and held it an instant?

"Cool, and quiet," he said. "It's all right. I didn't frighten you out of your wits yesterday?"

The "no, sir," was in a different tone.

"Do you suppose," he said, "that your mother will ever bear the sight of me again?"

"Why I hope so, sir," said Faith smiling.

"I don't know!" he said. "I wonder if I have been so much more wicked than I knew of? I don't think I have. I couldn't have punished myself any more."

Mrs. Derrick came in, followed by teapot and muffins, and having with her usual politeness requested the doctor to take a seat at the table, she proceeded to pour him out a cup of tea, nor even stinted him in sugar.

"If I stay at home according to your orders," said Mr. Linden, "I shall have all the trustees after me."

"You aren't just the person they ought to be after," said the doctor. "Mrs. Derrick, I don't know why we never have

anything at our house so good as this." The doctor was discussing a buttered muffin with satisfaction that was evidently unfeigned.

Mrs. Derrick knew why—but she wouldn't tell him, though exulting in her own knowledge. A low knock at the parlour door announced Reuben Taylor.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Derrick —" he said, —"but I went" —

"I am here, Reuben," said Mr. Linden.

The boy stayed not for more compliments then, but passing the ladies and the doctor with a collective bow, and "good evening, Miss Faith," went round with a quick step and a glad face to Mr. Linden. And kneeling down by him, with one hand on his shoulder, gave him the post despatches, and asked and answered questions not very loud but very earnestly. That was a phasis of Reuben Dr. Harrison had not seen before. He took good and broad note of it, though nothing interrupted the doctor's muffin — or muffins, for they were plural. Neither did he interrupt anything that was going on.

"Are you better, sir? are you really well enough to be down stairs?" — Dr. Harrison would hardly have known the voice. And the answering tone was of the gentlest and kindest, though the words failed to reach the doctor's ears. Some directions, or commissions, apparently, Mr. Linden gave for a few minutes, and then Reuben rose to his feet with a long breath that spoke a mind very much relieved. He paused for a moment on his way out, opposite Faith, as if he wanted a word in that quarter; but perhaps the doctor's presence forbade, for all the congratulation that Reuben gave her was in his face and bow. That did not satisfy Faith if it did him. She jumped up and gave him her hand, almost affectionately.

"You see I am safe and well, Reuben."

"I am so thankful, Miss Faith!" And the words said not half.

The doctor had finished his muffins and was standing before the fire again. "Have you found out yet, my man,"

he said in a somewhat amused voice, — "whose friend you are?"

The words jarred — and the colour on Reuben's face was of a different tint from that which had answered Faith. It was with his usual reserved manner, though nothing could be more civil, that he said, "No sir — no more than I knew before." But the respect was from Reuben as a boy to Dr. Harrison as a man. Faith's eye glanced from one to the other, and then she said, "What do you mean, Dr. Harrison?"

"Only a play of words," said the doctor lightly. "This young fellow is very cautious of making professions — as I have found."

"He has no need, sir," said Faith. She quitted as she spoke, the boy's hand which she had held until then, and came back to her seat. The words were spoken quietly enough and with as gentle a face, and yet with somewhat in the manner of both that met and fully answered all the bearing of the doctor's.

"You need not wait, Reuben," said his teacher — "I shall see you again by and by."

"Who is that?" said the doctor as Reuben went out.

"One of my body-guard," said Mr. Linden, with lips not yet at rest from their amused look.

"Are you waited upon by a Fehm-gericht? or may the members be known by the uninitiated?"

"I beg pardon!" said Mr. Linden, — "but as you seemed to know him, and as you really did know his name a week ago — That is Reuben Taylor, Dr. Harrison."

"So do I beg pardon! His name I do know, of course — as I have had occasion; but the essence of my enquiry remains in its integrity. *Him* I do not know. Where and to whom does he belong?"

"He is one of those of whom we spoke this morning," said Mr. Linden. "True servant of God is his title — to Him does Reuben belong. His home here is a little hut on the outskirts of Pattaquasset, his father a poor fisherman."

There was a minute's silence, all round.

"May I ask for a little enlightening, Miss Derrick?" said the doctor. "What do you mean, if you will be so good as to let me know, — by a person who 'does not need' to make professions."

Faith hesitated.

"Will you please say first, Dr. Harrison, just what you mean by 'professions?'" she said somewhat timidly.

"I shall shelter myself under your meaning," said he looking at her. "Fact is, I am not good at definitions — I don't half the time know what I'm saying myself."

Faith cast an involuntary glance for help towards Mr. Linden; but getting none she came back to the doctor and the question, blushing a good deal.

"I think," she said, "professions are telling people what you wish them to believe of you."

The doctor looked comical, also threw a glance in the direction of Mr. Linden, but put his next question seriously.

"Why do you say this Reuben Taylor does not need to make professions? according to this definition."

"Because those who know him know what he is, without them."

"But do you mean that there is no use in making professions? How are you to know what a man is?"

"Unless he tells you?" said Faith smiling.

The doctor stood, half smiling; evidently revolving more thoughts than of one kind. With a face from which every shadow was banished he suddenly took a seat by Mrs. Derrick.

"Do you know," he said with gentle pleasantness of manner and expression, "how much better man I should be if I should come here and get only one definition a day from your little daughter?"

"What one has she given you now?" said Mrs. Derrick, whose mind evidently stood in abeyance upon this speech.

"One you didn't hear, ma'am. It was a definition of me, to myself. It isn't the first," said the doctor gravely. "Mrs. Derrick, are you friends with me?"

"As much as I ever was," said Mrs. Derrick, smilingly. "I always thought you wanted putting in order."

"How did you know that?"

"Why, because you were out of order," said Mrs. Derrick, knitting away. The doctor uttered the lowest of whistles and looked down at his boot.

"It's because of that unlucky dog!" he muttered. "Linden —" (glancing up from under his eyebrows) "when I was a boy, I set my dog on Miss Faith's cat."

"Felt yourself called upon to uphold natural antipathies —"

"Miss Faith, have you a cat now?" said the doctor looking over to her.

"No, sir."

"And I have no dog!" said the doctor. "I have only horses. If I could manage to do without animals altogether, — Mrs. Derrick, have you forgiven me?" This last was in a changed tone.

"I don't want to talk about it, doctor," said Mrs. Derrick very soberly.

"About forgiving me?" he said as soberly.

"And I don't mean to."

"Nor I," said the doctor quietly; "but you are going to inflict more punishment on me than I deserve."

"What am I going to do?" said Mrs. Derrick. "If you know, I don't."

"Refuse to give me your hand, perhaps."

"I never did that to anybody, yet," she said pleasantly.

"Then you must let me do as we do in another country."

He bent his face to her hand as he spoke, and kissed it. There was no mockery in the action. Done by some people it would have been ridiculous. By Dr. Harrison, in the circumstances, it was in the highest degree graceful. It spoke sympathy, penitence, respect, manly confession, and submission, too simply not to be what it certainly was in some measure, a true expression of feeling. Mrs. Derrick on her part looked amused, — her old recollections of the boy con-

stantly tinged her impressions of the man; and perhaps not without reason.

"You're as like yourself as ever you can be, doctor!" she said, smiling at him. "How you used to try to get round me!"

"I don't remember!" said the doctor. "I am sure I never succeeded, Mrs. Derrick?"

"I'm afraid you did, sometimes," she said, shaking her head. He smiled a little, and turned the other way.

"Linden, I've been considering the German question."

"Will it please you to state the result?"

"This!" said the doctor. "I have come to the conclusion, — that in order to be One and Somewhat, it is necessary to begin by being Nought and All — Thus ranging myself in security on *both* sides of a great abyss of metaphysics. What do you think? Unphilosophical?"

"Unsafe —" said Mr. Linden. "And impossible."

"Humph?" — said the doctor. "Nothing is impossible in metaphysics — because you may be on both sides of an abyss, and in the bottom of it! — at once — and without knowing where you are. The angel that rode Milton's sunbeam, you know, was no time at all going from heaven to earth; and I suppose he went the other way as quick."

"I don't see the abyss in that case," said Mr. Linden, — "but

—— 'Uriel to his charge
Returned on that bright beam' —

so probably he did."

"Yes" — said the doctor. — "And my meaning skipped the abyss, — also on a sunbeam. It referred to the unsubstantial means of travelling in use among metaphysicians."

"And among angels."

"That reminds me," said the doctor. And quitting his stand on the rug, which he had taken again, he went over to Faith and sat down by her.

"Is the Nightingale flourishing on her rose-bush to-day?"

"What, sir?" said Faith, her eyes opening at him a little.

"I beg pardon!" said the doctor. "I have been living in a part of the world, Miss Derrick, where it is the fashion to call things not by their right names. I have got a foolish habit of it. Do you feel quite recovered?"

"Quite. I'm a little tired to-night, perhaps."

"I see you are, and I'll not detain you. Mrs. Custers wants to see you again." He had dropped all banter, and was speaking to her quietly, respectfully, kindly, as he should speak; in a lowered tone, but not so low as to be unheard by others than her.

"I will try to see her again soon — I will try to go very soon," she answered.

"Would you be afraid to go with my father's old stand-bys? — they are safe!" —

"I cannot do that, Dr. Harrison — but I will try to see her soon."

"Can you go without riding?"

"No," she said smiling; "but I must find some other way."

"I won't press that point," said the doctor. "I can't blame you. I must bear that. But — I want for my own sake to have the honour of a little talk with you — I want to explain to you one or two things. Shall you be at leisure to-morrow afternoon?"

"I am hardly *at leisure* any time, Dr. Harrison. I do not suppose I shall be particularly busy then."

"Then will you take that time for a walk?"

Faith hesitated. "I have very little time, sir."

"But you take time to go out?"

"Not much."

"I will not ask much. A little will do; and so much you owe to skyey influences. You will not refuse me that?"

"I will go, Dr. Harrison," Faith answered after an instant a little soberly. He rose up then; proposed to attend upon Mr. Linden, and they went up stairs together.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Faith was half ready to wish the next day might be rainy: but it rose fair and bright. She must go to walk, probably; and visiters might come. The only thing to be done was to despatch her ordinary duties as quick as possible, prepare her French exercise, and go to her teacher early. Which she did.

She came in with a face as bright as the day, although a little less ready to look in everybody's eyes. There were enough things ready for her. Lessons were pressed rather more steadily than usual, perhaps because they had been neglected a little for the last two days — or hindered; and it was not till one book and another had done its work, till the exercise was copied and various figure puzzles disposed of, that Mr. Linden told her he thought a talking exercise ought to come next, — if she had one ready he should like to have the benefit of it.

"You are tired, Mr. Linden!" said Faith quickly.

"You may begin by giving me the grounds of that conclusion."

"I don't know," she said half laughing, — "I don't see it; but that don't make me know. I was afraid you were tired with this work."

"Very unsafe, Miss Faith, to build up such a superstructure upon grounds that you neither see nor know. I was immediately beginning to question the style of my own explanations this morning."

"Why, sir?"

"If I seem tired, said explanations may have seemed — tiresome."

She looked silently, with a smile, as if questioning the possibility of his thinking so; and her answer did not go to that point.

"You didn't *seem* tired, Mr. Linden — I had no reason for thinking so, I suppose. I was only afraid. I was

going to ask you what Dr. Harrison meant last night by the angel riding upon a sunbeam? I saw you knew what he meant."

Mr. Linden got up and went for a book — then came back to his couch again.

"Precisely what Dr. Harrison meant, Miss Faith, I should not like to say. What he referred to, was a part of Paradise Lost, where the angels set to guard the earth have a messenger.

> 'Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
> On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star.' "

"Who is Uriel? an angel?"

"Yes. He is called,

> 'The archangel Uriel, one of the seven
> Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
> Stand ready at his command, and are his eyes.
> That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth,
> Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,
> O'er sea and land.' "

Faith listened, evidently with a pleased ear.

"But I suppose the angel could come as well without the sunbeam as with it?"

"I suppose so!" he said smiling. "In my belief, angels go where the sunbeams do not. But Milton chose to name Uriel as the special regent of the sun, and so passing to and fro on its rays."

"What do you mean by 'regent,' Mr. Linden?"

"A regent is one appointed to rule in place of the king."

"But that don't seem to me true, Mr. Linden," said Faith after a little meditation.

"What, and why?"

Faith blushed at finding herself 'in for it,' but went on.

"I don't suppose the sun wants anybody to rule it or to take care of it, under its Maker?"

"Yet it may please him to have guardian spirits there as well as here, — about that we know not. In the Revelation, you know, an angel is spoken of as 'standing in the sun,' and

from that Milton took his idea. Part of the description is very beautiful, at least; —

'So spake the false dissembler unperceived;
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through heaven and earth.
And oft though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill,
Where no ill seems: which now for once beguiled
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
The sharpest sighted spirit of all in heaven.'"

"Who is the person spoken of in the first line, Mr. Linden?"

"Satan — applying to Uriel for guidance to the new created earth and its inhabitants, on the same plea that Herod presented to the wise men."

"But that's a story?" said Faith.

"Yes. The Bible only tells the work done by him after he got here."

"Mr. Linden, will you read that over once more for me."

She listened with a face of absorbed intentness while it was read; then looked away from the book with an unconscious but very audible sigh.

"Well?" Mr. Linden said, smiling as he looked at her.

"I like it *very* much!" was Faith's answer.

"Is that what made you sigh?"

"Sigh!" she said starting a little and colouring. "No, — I didn't mean to sigh."

"The fact is more than the intention. Whence came that?"

"It was only — Please don't ask me, Mr. Linden. I can't tell you."

He made no answer to that, but turning over the leaves read to her here and there without much comment, — then asked her if she was tired of hearing about angels.

"I think I should never be tired!" said Faith. "But you must be, Mr. Linden. Please," she said putting her

hand gently on the book, — "don't read for me any more. Is all the book like that?"

"Not quite all — I have given you some bits that I particularly like, but there is much more. You need not be uneasy about my being tired," he said smiling; "if I were, by your own shewing I can have rest. However, Miss Faith — lessons being the order of the day — will you read French to me?"

In her reading, Faith came to the description of the philosopher's perplexity in finding that the birds would not pick up the crumbs he threw to them on the roof as usual. He concluded the feathered things were not more reasonable than mankind, and had taken fright for nothing.

"J'allais fermer ma fenêtre sur cette reflection, quand j'aperçois tout à coup, dans l'espace lumineux qui s'étend à droite, l'ombre de deux oreilles qui se dressent, puis une griffe qui s'avance, puis la tête d'un chat tigré qui se montre à l'angle de la gouttière. Le drole était là en ambuscade, espérant que les aniettes lui amèneraient du gibier.

"Et moi qui accusais la couardise de mes hôtes! J'étais sûr qu'aucun danger ne les menaçait! je croyais avoir bien regardé partout! je n'avais oublié que le coin derrière moi!

"Dans la vie comme sur les toits, que de malheurs arrivent pour avoir oublié un seul coin!"

Faith closed the book then, very much amused with the philosopher's "chat tigré."

"But often one can't see round the corner," she remarked.

A little gesture of lips and brow, half asserted that if one could not, *one* could: but Mr. Linden only said,

"Most true! Miss Faith. Nevertheless, the knowledge that there *are* corners is not to be despised."

"I don't know. I shouldn't like to live always in fear of seeing the shadow of a cat's ears come in."

"Have you quite outgrown the love of cats?" said Mr. Linden smiling.

"No, but I was talking of the fear of corners," she said

with an answering smile. "I don't think I want to remember the corners, Mr. Linden."

"I don't think I want you should. Philosophers and birds, you know, go through the world on different principles."

She laughed a little at that, gave the hearth a parting brush, and went off to dinner.

Business claimed its place after dinner, business of a less pleasant kind, quite up to the time when Faith must put on her bonnet to walk with Dr. Harrison.

Faith had no great mind to the walk, but she couldn't help finding it pleasant. The open air was very sweet and bracing; the exercise was inspiriting and the threatened talk went well with both. There was nothing whatever formidable about it; the words and thoughts seemed to play, like the sunlight, on anything that came in their way. Dr. Harrison knew how to make a walk or a talk pleasant, even to Faith, it seemed. Whatever she had at any time seen in him that she did not like, was out of sight; pleasant, gentle, intelligent, grave, he was constantly supplying ear and mind with words and things that were worth the having. Probably he had discovered her eager thirst for knowledge; for he furnished her daintily with bits of many a kind, from his own stores which were large. She did not know there was any design in this; she knew only that the steps were taken very easily in that walk. So pleasant it was that Faith was in no haste to turn, in no mood to quicken her pace. But something else was on her mind, — and must come out.

"Dr. Harrison," — she said when they were in a quiet part of the way, with nobody near, "may I speak to you about something? — that perhaps you won't like?"

"You can speak of nothing I should not like — to hear," he said with gentle assurance.

"Dr. Harrison —" said Faith, speaking as if the recollection touched her, — "when you and I were thrown out in that meadow the other day and came so near losing our lives — if the *almost* had been *quite*, if we had both been killed, — *I*

should have been safe and well, I believe. — How would it have been with you?"

Dr. Harrison looked at her.

"If I had gone in your company," he said, "I think it would hardly have been ill with me."

"Do you know so little as that?" — she said, in such a tone of sorrow and pity as might have suited one of the 'ministering spirits' she had been likened to.

"I don't think I am as good as you are," the doctor said with a face not unmoved.

"Good!" said Faith. "What do you mean by goodness, Dr. Harrison?"

"I shall have the worst of it if I try to go into definitions again," he said smiling. "I think you will find what I mean, in consulting your own thoughts."

"Goodness?" said Faith again. "Do you remember the silver scale-armour of that Lepisma, Dr. Harrison? *That* is perfection. That is what God means by goodness — not the outside things that every eye, or your own, can see; — but when the far-down, far-back thoughts and imaginations of your heart will bear *such* looking at and be found faultless! Less than that, God will not take from you, if you are going to heaven by your own goodness."

He looked at her. They had changed sides; and as fearless now as he, *she* was the speaker, and he had little to say.

"I don't know much about these things, Miss Faith," he answered soberly.

"I don't know much, Dr. Harrison," she said humbly. "But think what you were near the other day."

"I don't know!" — said he, as if making a clean breast of it. She paused.

"Dr. Harrison, will a wise man leave such a matter in uncertainty?"

"I am not wise," said he. "I am ignorant — in this."

"You know you need not remain so."

"That is not so certain! I have seen so much — of what

you have seen so little, my dear Miss Derrick, that you can scarce understand how light the weight of most people's testimony is to me."

"But there is the testimony of one higher," said Faith. "There is God's own word?"

"I don't know it."

"*Won't* you know it, sir?"

"I will do anything you ask me in that voice," he said smiling at her. "But after all one reads people and people's *professions*, Miss Faith; — and they make the first impression."

"I dare say it is often not true," said Faith sadly.

"*You* are true," said he; "and you may say to me what you will, on this subject or any other, and I will believe it."

They walked a little distance in silence.

"What are you thinking of?" said the doctor in a very gentle accent of enquiry.

"I am sorry — very sorry for you, Dr. Harrison."

"Why?" said he taking her hand.

"Because it seems to me you are not caring in earnest about this matter."

He kissed the hand, without asking permission. But it was done with a grateful warm expression of feeling.

"I will do whatever you tell me to do!" he said.

How Faith wished she could send him to another adviser! But that she could not.

"Tell me," he repeated. "I will do it." The look and tone were earnest, moved, and warm; she had hardly seen the like in Dr. Harrison before.

"Then, Dr. Harrison, I wish you would read the Bible, with the determination to do what you find there you ought."

"I will," he said smiling. "And if I get into difficulty you must help me."

The rest of the way was extremely pleasant, after that; only it seemed to Faith that they met all the world! First there was Cecilia Deacon, whose eyes took good note, she thought, of both the walkers from head to foot. Then they

met at intervals every one of Faith's Sunday school scholars; for every one of whom she had a glad greeting and word which she must stop for, somewhat to the doctor's amused edification. Miss Bezac happened, of all people, to be going up street when they were going down; and her eyes looked rather with some wistful gravity upon the pair, for all her pleasant nods to both. Then Mrs. Somers.

"Well I think you are *Faith!*" — was her brisk remark, — "or faith*less* — which is it? Julius, I heard a remarkable story about you yesterday."

"Aunt Ellen — I like to hear remarkable stories. Especially about anything remarkable."

"Well this isn't one of that sort," said Mrs. Somers.

"I am sure you said — However, let's have it, of any sort."

"I heard you had your pocket picked of a good opportunity," said Mrs. Somers. "Does Mr. Linden expect to be out next week, Faith?"

"I believe Dr. Harrison will not let him, Mrs. Somers."

A little unverbalized sound answered that, and Mr. Somers said good evening and walked on. Faith thought that was the end, as they were near her own door. But Dr. Harrison followed her in; and entering the sitting-room, Faith found that her meetings were not over. There was no less a person than Mrs. Stoutenburgh, and there also, regaling her eyes and ears, were Mrs. Derrick and Mr. Linden.

Mrs. Stoutenburgh was a fair, pretty, curly-haired woman, a good deal younger than the Squire, intensely devoted to her own family, and very partial to Mr. Linden — whom she had taken under her wing (figuratively) from his first coming to Pattaquasset. The first sound Faith heard as she opened the door was Mrs. Stoutenburgh's merry laugh at some remark of his — then the lady jumped up and came towards her.

"My dear Faith, how do you do? — Dr. Harrison — I half said I would never speak to you again! Faith, how can you trust yourself with him for one minute?"

"Mrs. Stoutenburgh," said the doctor, — "I half thought I would shoot myself!"

"I guess that's as near as you'll come to it, on purpose," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh. "You needn't think I shall forget it — whenever I want Faith to come and see me I shall tell Mr. Linden to bring her. He's safe — or supposed to be," she added laughingly.

"I hope that's as near to it as I shall ever come on purpose, or *otherwise*, Mrs. Stoutenburgh!" said the doctor. "I think you should judge me safer than Mr. Linden, — as appearances go."

"Squire Deacon used to tell very hard stories of him when he first came," said the lady — "and I *have* heard a report or two since. I do love to talk to him about it! — he always looks so grave, I think he likes it."

The laugh was mutual, whether the delight was or no.

"Who is Squire Deacon?" said the doctor. "I should like to make his acquaintance."

Faith took off her bonnet, and then pulled off her gloves, deliberately, and bestowed them on the table.

"O he's a Pattaquasseter," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh — "haven't you seen his sister? She admires you — more than I think she need," she added mischievously. "But the Squire's been away for awhile, — he just got home this afternoon."

Faith had recourse to the fire. The doctor came round, took the tongs from her and did the work; after which he took a somewhat succinct leave of the assembly.

"By the way, Linden," he said pausing by his chair a moment, — "I expect to be in Quilipeak for a few days — I am very sorry, but I must. You won't want me, I think. Limbre can do all that is necessary. I shall see you Monday or Tuesday again."

"Doctor!" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh — "I want you to take me home. Mr. Stoutenburgh always makes such a fuss if I'm out after dark and don't bring anybody home to tea, that I never dare do it."

"Will you trust yourself with me, Mrs. Stoutenburgh?" said the doctor standing in comical doubt.

"Just wait a minute," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, as she went round with her pretty, free, womanly manner, and laid her hand on Mr. Linden's forehead and hands, just as if he had been one of her own boys, "I tell you what — I don't think you cure him up half fast enough among you. If I had him up at my house I'd take better care of him."

"No, Mrs. Stoutenburgh, even you could not do that," he said looking up at her. She stood still a moment.

"You shouldn't look at me so," she said, — "I shall go home and feel real bad for all the nonsense I've been talking. You know," she added, with the mischievous look coming back, "I never did believe one word of it — except —" and the sentence was finished softly. "Now I'm ready, doctor — O Faith, I had a message for you, but Mr. Linden will tell you. Good-bye. No, doctor — I'm not going to trust myself with you, — you're going to trust yourself with me."

Dr. Harrison was for once quiet, and went off without a repartee.

Other eyes looked with a different anxiety at Mr. Linden then, and another voice, more grave as well as more timid, asked, at his side, "Are you not so well to-night, Mr. Linden?"

He smiled, and gave her his hand by way of answer, before he spoke.

"I think I am, Miss Faith — you know Mrs. Stoutenburgh has not seen me before since I was quite well."

She brought both hands to test the feeling of his, for an instant, without speaking.

"Mr. Linden, I heard what Dr. Harrison said — Don't you think I can do instead of Dr. Limbre?"

"Yes, Miss Faith — if you will be so good," he answered without hesitation and with the simplest tone and manner. Her brow lightened immediately; and happy and quiet as usual, and that was very happy, she began to make her preparations for tea, clearing the table and rolling it to its last night's position. In which last operation she had assistance. Then she went off for her tea — and the lamp

and the fire-light shone again presently on the pleasant scene of last night.

"Don't you want to hear your message, Miss Faith?" Mr. Linden said.

"Yes, but I wasn't in a hurry, Mr. Linden. I supposed it would come."

"It is in three parts. The first is nothing new; being merely that the birthday of the young heir of the house of Stoutenburgh occurs on the 29th of November. Whether the second part is new, I — being a stranger — cannot tell; but the day is to be graced with various suitable festivities."

"It's all new to me," said Faith laughing.

"Of the novelty of the third part you also must judge," said Mr. Linden with a smile. "The aforesaid young heir will consider the festivities entirely incomplete without your presence — nay, will perhaps refuse to have his birthday come at all, and wish that these 'happy returns' had never had a beginning."

Faith's laugh came with its full merry roll now, and she withal coloured a little.

"What must I do then, Mr. Linden?"

"I generally incline to the merciful side, Miss Faith — I believe I should advise you to go. Then I, not having such power in my hands, may not appreciate its fascinations."

"Such power? As what, Mr. Linden?"

"I ought in conscience to tell you —" he went on without answering her, — "it has been on my mind ever since, that the other night" — and the look was grave for a minute — "the trophy of a broken rosebud was picked up where you fell. And I had not the heart to reclaim it, Miss Faith," Mr. Linden said, with a submissive air of confession.

She looked at him with the prettiest look in the world, of grave, only half conscious enquiry; and then the lost rosebud was more than replaced in her cheeks.

"That is the state of the case," Mr. Linden said, as gravely as if both rosebuds had been out of sight and mind, "but your mother refuses to go. And it seems that I also am wanted

on the 29th; so if you please, Miss Faith, I will try to see that you make the journey both ways in safety."

"I should like to go," said Faith quietly. "They are pleasant people."

The tea things were withdrawn, and Cindy was no more needed there, and Mrs. Derrick also had gone into the other part of the house to attend to some business. Faith stood before the fire looking meditatively into it.

"I wish," she said slowly and soberly, — "Dr. Harrison would please to talk to you instead of to me, Mr. Linden!"

"Talk to me?" Mr. Linden repeated, looking at her. "About professions?"

"No indeed!" said Faith, first astonished and then smiling, — "I mean very different things. About religion, and what he thinks of it?"

Rather soberly the words were received, and soberly answered, not at once.

"Do not let him say much to you on that last point, Miss Faith."

"How can I help it, Mr. Linden?" she said instantly.

"Forbid him, if need be. If he asks for information, and you choose to give it, that is one thing, — you are not obliged to hear all the skeptical views and arguments with which he is furnished. Your statement of the truth has nothing to do with the grounds of his unbelief."

"But —"

Faith got no further. She stood thinking of that afternoon's talk, and of the certain possible hindrances to her following such advice.

"I am talking a little in the dark, you know," Mr. Linden said, — "I am only supposing what he may say and ask you to say; and I do not think much of such conversation between any parties. Press home the truth — and like David's pebble it may do its work; but in a fencing match David might have found it harder to maintain his ground. And his overthrow would not have touched the truth of his cause, nor perhaps his own faith — yet the Philistine would have triumphed."

"Thank you, Mr. Linden," she said with a grateful smile. "That is just the truth. But, do you think Dr. Harrison is — exactly a Philistine?"

"Not in all respects," he said smiling. "What do you mean by a Philistine?"

"I thought you put him in the place of *that* Philistine," she said.

"Yes, for the illustration. But I do not know him to be strictly a *champion* of unbelief, although he avows himself on that side. His conversations with me have left me uncertain how far he would go."

Faith was silent and looked thoughtful.

"Have I touched any of your difficulties? May I hear any more?"

"No —" she said. "I believe you have said all you can say. And it is good for me."

"I have not said all I *could* say, but it is not easy for me to talk to you about it at all. You see, Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden smiling, "there cannot be such an anomaly in nature as a philosophical bird — so what am I to do?"

Faith smiled a little and thought that as long as he gave her the benefit of his philosophy, it did not much matter. Which recondite view of the subject she did not put into words.

The days began to roll on smoothly once more, subsiding into their old uneventful flow. The flow of talk indeed had not quite subsided; but as nothing came to throw any light on the point of the unknown sportsman who chose his sport so strangely, curiosity took a modified, condensed form; and the whole matter was stowed away in people's minds as the one Pattaquasset mystery. Happy Pattaquasset!

Even Mr. Linden's protracted confinement to the house made little difference to most, he had been so little seen when he was able to be out: only the boys had had his daylight hours; and where he had spent those times of twilight and evening when he was not at home, no one knew but the poor unknown class who mourned his absence as they had blessed

his presence, in secret. The boys were not silent, — but they had the indemnification of going to see him, and of watching — or sleeping — in his room at night, according to their various dispositions. There came all his scholars on Sunday, — met by Faith on her contrary way; there came the whole school by turns, and at all hours. Indeed when once the embargo upon visiters was taken off, the supply was great! — and without careful measures on the part of Mr. Linden, French exercises would have been put aside with a witness. But he made two or three rules, and carried them out. In the first place he would see nobody before dinner, except the doctor; nor anybody after tea, save the same privileged individual. In the second place, when he was able to be out of his room without too much fatigue, the lessons were carried on down stairs, — in the dining-room generally, as being more private. There could both parties come and go without observation; and often when Mrs. Derrick was entertaining a roomful, a sudden fall of the thin partition would have revealed the very people they were discussing, deep in some pretty point of information. Pretty those lessons were! Faith's steps, — arithmetical, geographical, or what other, — were swift, steady, and sure; herself indefatigable, her teacher no less. If Mr. Linden had not quite come to be in her eyes "an old school book," she was yet enough accustomed to his teaching and animadversions to merge the binding in the book; and as to him, she might have been one of his school boys, for the straightforward way in which he opened paths of knowledge and led her through. The leading was more careful of her strength, more respectful of her timidity, — was more strictly *leading* than *pushing*, — that was all. Of course in two weeks, or even in four, the best of teachers and scholars could make but a beginning; but that was well made, and the work went steadily on from thence — despite "teaching all day," despite the various other calls for time and strength.

And Faith was as docile and obedient as Johnny Fax himself, and as far as those qualities went, very much in the same way. If the denial of Phil's *information* and Mr. Linden's

manner the day after her overturn, had raised a doubt as to the real abstractness of his regard for her, Faith's modesty and simplicity put the thought well into the background. She did not care to look at it or bring it up; in the full, happy, peaceful hours she was enjoying she had enough, for the present; and so Faith went on very much after her old fashion. A little quieter, perhaps, when not called out of it; a little shyer of even innocently putting herself forward; but in speech or action, speaking and acting with her wonted free simplicity.

The only breaks in these weeks were one or two visits to Mrs. Custers, and the doctor's comings and goings. He could not be shut out.

The Monday evening after the doctor's absence at Quilipeak, the little party were as usual in the sitting-room; and a pretty chapter of Physical Geography was in process of reading and talk, when the doctor's quick wheels at the door announced not only his return but his arrival. And Mr. Linden announced to his scholar, that it was needful now to return to the surface of the earth and attend to the flow of conversation — and to put the book in his pocket.

"Are you glad to see me back?" said the doctor as he took the hand of his patient. He looked rather glad himself.

"If I say yes, that will be to confess that I have reason. You perceive my dilemma," Mr. Linden said, but with a smile that was certainly as kind and trustworthy as any the doctor had seen since he went away.

"Do you mean — that you have no reason to be glad?" said Dr. Harrison slowly, eying the smile and giving it, to judge by his own, a trustful regard.

"Certainly not! It's a comfort to have somebody at hand who is ready to fight me at any moment," said Mr. Linden.

"What have you been doing since I went away?"

"Reading, writing, and considering the world generally."

"From this Pattaquasset centre!"

"Why not? — if lines meet and make it one."

"How do you get the ends of the lines in your hands!" said

the doctor. "A centre, I feel it to be — but very like the centre of the earth — socially and politically. You see, I have just emerged to the surface, and come down again. Who has taken care of you?"

"I feel quite equal to the task of taking care of myself, thank you, doctor."

"You don't mean to say, man, you have dressed your arm yourself?"

"What *do* you suppose my powers are equal to?"

"That is a matter," said the doctor, "upon which I stand in doubt — which gives me an uncomfortable, troublesome sort of feeling when I am in your presence. It must be superstition. I suppose I shall get the better of it — or of you! — in time. Meanwhile, who *has* dressed your arm for you?"

The answer was given very quietly, very simply, not very loud. "The lady whom you had the honour of instructing in the art, Dr. Harrison."

"Did you do it well?" said Dr. Harrison somewhat comically, wheeling round before Faith.

She was a contrast; as her face looked up at him, rather pleased, and her soft voice answered, — "I think I did, sir."

"I don't doubt you did! And I don't doubt you would do anything. Are you preparing to be another Portia? And am I to be Bellario?"

"I don't know what you mean, Dr. Harrison."

"Do you know the story of Portia? — in the Merchant of Venice?"

"I never read it."

"She was a dangerous character," said the doctor. "Portia, Miss Derrick, wishing to save not the life but the character and happiness of a — But what a way this is to tell you the story! Is there a Shakspeare here?"

"We haven't it," said Faith quietly.

"I'll bring the play the next time I come, if you will allow me," he said sitting down by her; — "and indoctrinate you in something more interesting than my first lesson. How shall I thank you for doing my work for me?"

"It became my work."

"I am in your debt nevertheless — more than you can know without being one of my profession. I have something that I wish to submit to your inspection, and to take your advice upon, too. It will be fit to be seen, I hope, by the day after to-morrow. If I could I would bring it here — but as that is not possible — Will you go to see it?"

"Where is it?"

"Not far; but it will cost you the taking of a few steps."

Faith declared she had hardly time to go to see anything; but was obliged finally to yield to persuasion, and Thursday was the day fixed. The thing, whatever it was, however, was not ready when the day came, and the exhibition was put off indefinitely.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Those weeks, like others, came to an end. And then Mr. Linden gave notice to all and sundry of his scholars, that his time of seclusion was at an end — only giving way to advice so far, as to accept the daily use of Squire Stoutenburgh's close carriage, until his health should be in a more assured state. Monday morning he was to take up his old routine of school duties; though none too fit for it, in the estimation of some people, — the doctor said it was a month too soon. And no one could look at him and forget the last month's work, — a little exertion made the work very apparent; and as they sat at breakfast Monday morning, Mrs. Derrick made up her own mind privately that Dr. Harrison should have found some means to keep him in the house and from work yet longer. But the result of her meditations was not put in words; the effect betrayed itself in the extra care bestowed upon cups of coffee — the only thing within her reach.

It was a cold morning, true November, with its driving grey wind clouds, through which the cool sunbeams straggled fitfully; with trees shorn of their golden honours, and brown branches waving and twisting in the wind, and only mere

specks of blue here and there overhead. The gulls sailed to and fro above the Mong as if they rejoiced in the fierce gusts of northern wind; the vessels shortened sail, or ran under bare poles. The wind shook the village windows, and poured dry leaves in every porch, and swept up the world generally — not much to the comfort of the same. In Mrs. Derrick's little eating-room indeed, it was warm enough, and the floor swept after another fashion; yet even there did the wind rush in, whenever the kitchen door opened, after Cindy and the hot cakes.

"Mr. Linden," said Faith after her eye had gone exploringly to the window, the wind and the clouds, — "I wish you would give the boys only half a day to-day!"

"I fancy you could have your wish seconded thirty times," he said smiling. "No — not thirty times, but perhaps twenty."

"I don't think those wishes would be worth minding; but I think mine is, Mr. Linden. I mean the reason of it."

"I think yours is — if I could mind it. What is the reason, Miss Faith?"

"I am afraid you are not quite fit for a whole day's work. In school," she added smiling.

"You don't know what you are asking! — if I stay at home I shall talk nothing but French the whole afternoon."

"Well," said Faith laughingly, "I should only be still. I could bear that."

"I couldn't — and you wouldn't. But you need not be uneasy, Miss Faith — I must not be at home."

She looked grave, but said no more.

The wind was not more busy out of doors that day, than the people within. Diligent and quick hands moved about in dairy and kitchen; and a quick and diligent spirit as earnestly — (for in Faith's mind it was all one work; *that* was on the way to *this*) — dealt with problems and idioms in the study room that Faith liked best and where she was most secure. But long enough before dinner she was help ing Mrs. Derrick in the kitchen again.

"Mother," she said, "you can't think how I dread to see Mr. Linden come home to-day! He won't speak one word of English to me."

"I guess he would, if you wouldn't speak one word of French to him," said Mrs. Derrick sagaciously. "What are you afraid of, child?"

"I am afraid just of that," said Faith sighing. "Of having to speak those French words."

"Why you've been reading them to him, I'm sure," said her mother. "I didn't know anybody was afraid of him but me, Faith. But if you don't like it, why don't you tell him so?"

Faith however negatived that proposition with a dubious shake of the head; which meant, probably, that neither Mr. Linden nor herself would be satisfied with such a mode of procedure; and confined her present attentions to the dinner preparations. In which and other matters she became so engaged that she forgot her fears; and going into the dining room some time after with a dish in her hands and finding Mr. Linden there, Faith asked him earnestly and with great simplicity, "how he felt after his morning's work." Then remembering, or reminded by something in his face, she started away like a deer before any answer could be given; and only came back demurely with her mother, — to receive his grave reverence and "Me voici, mademoiselle!" — given just as if he had not seen her before. The half grave half laughing flash of Faith's eye spoke as much of amusement as of fear; yet afraid she certainly was, for she did not so much as speak English to her mother. The language of the eye was all she ventured; nor that boldly. It had to come, however, fear or no fear, — the English might be dispensed with but not the French. She could not but try to understand the remarks or bits of information which were given her — sometimes gravely sometimes laughing; and if Mr. Linden was evidently waiting for an answer — what could she do but try that too! He was an admirable dictionary, very quick at seeing and supplying her want of a word, and giving his corrections of her phra-

seology and pronunciation so gently and by the way, that fear partly lost itself in interest. His own speech was singularly smooth and perfect; and whenever Faith found herself getting frightened, she was sure to be assailed with such a volley of swift flowing syllables, that she could do nothing but laugh, — after which Mr. Linden would come back to the slower utterance which she could better understand. After all, Faith's words that first time were few, and it may safely be asserted that she did not in the least know what she was eating, and made no sort of a dinner. Of that last fact her instructor was well aware, but as his first "Mais mademoiselle, mangez!" received but little attention, he postponed that point till just as he was going away, and then made a rather stringent request to the same effect.

So the afternoon passed on, and blew itself out, and the sun went to bed and night began to light her candles. Faith, standing at the window (it was too cold to be out) saw the red gleam fading from earth and sky, and the cold bright stars coming one by one into view. Then the boys began to pass by, — some together and some alone; walking or running home, or playing ball by the way. Mr. Linden's carriage was a little behind them all, but he came at last, and gave her a bow and a smile from the gate though she thought herself standing too far back to be seen.

"Now Mr. Linden," said Faith when he came in, — "I am so glad to speak to you again! How do you do?" The question was not lightly given.

"Miss Faith, did you finish your dinner?"

"No —" said Faith hesitating, — "but I am going to have some tea by and by. Aren't you well tired, Mr. Linden?"

"Pretty well — Why didn't you?"

"I wanted to be doing something else," — said Faith, giving the easy chair a little push into place, and then brightening up the fire. "I shall have tea in here to-night, Mr. Linden. But we must wait a little while for it, for Cindy is out. You won't be sorry to rest first."

She was summarily, though very respectfully put in the easy chair herself.

"By what rule of right and wrong did you do anything else first? Do you know, Miss Faith, I did not finish mine either — I wanted another piece of bread, and could not get it!"

"Why not, Mr. Linden? I am sure there was bread on the table. But I am glad if you are hungry, for I have got something that you like. Now please rest!" she said springing up and beginning to arrange the table.

"I am sure I asked you for it politely," he said with a smile, as he yielded to her "please rest." "What have you been about all day?"

"I have been learning my lessons — and trying how well I could get on by myself."

"Get on by yourself?" he said rather slowly and inquiringly. "In what?"

"In the books — in my studies, Mr. Linden."

"Are you tired of my help, Miss Faith?"

She gave all her eyes to the answer, both in their sweetness and their gravity. "Do you think I could let you spend all your time upon me, Mr. Linden, when your whole day is given to such work? I'll come to you for help whenever I can't get on without it," she said with a smile, not exactly an enjoying one, — "but I know I can do a good deal by myself."

His eyes were given to the answer too, a little intently, but the smile that followed was different.

"I think you will let me do what I shall do, Miss Faith."

"I suppose that!" said Faith with a bright gleam in her eyes. She went out to see if Cindy had come back; but returned immediately, sat down and looked gravely into the fire.

"What is the use of startling people in that way?" Mr. Linden said, looking at her. "I didn't know but you were going to send me to take up my abode at Mrs. Seacomb's!"

"Startling, Mr. Linden!" said Faith opening her eyes

at him. "I said it because I thought it was right. I didn't think it was pleasant."

"Well," said he, "we were agreed upon that point. Now Miss Faith, as my time is precious, and I cannot well give any of it to people who have enough of their own — would it disturb you if I were to read aloud a little here for my own amusement?"

She changed her place to come nearer, without saying anything, but with a face of quiet delight only half revealed.

"What do you think of the relative and respective charms of Mirth and Melancholy, Miss Faith? — I mean their charms to inward perception, not outward sight."

"The pleasure of them?" said Faith.

"Yes — pleasure and satisfaction."

"I never thought there was any pleasure in Melancholy," said Faith smiling at the idea, but smiling inquiringly too.

In answer, Mr. Linden opened his book and gave her the Allegro and Penseroso, — gave them with not only a full appreciation, but with a delicate change and suiting of voice and manner — and look, even — that made them witching.

And if ever a hearer was bewitched, that was Faith. She lent her ear to the music, her eye to the eye, her thought to the thought, in utter forgetfulness of all else. At first she listened quietly, sitting where she was, looking sometimes at the fire, sometimes at the reader; but then she abandoned herself to full enjoyment, left her chair for a low seat near Mr. Linden, almost at his feet; and with upraised face and intent eye and varying play of lip, devoured it all. Sometimes the poetry certainly got beyond the bounds of her stock of knowledge; but that mattered not; for whenever the reading failed, the reader filled up all the gap and Faith listened to *him*. Precisely what it was to have just such a hearer, was best known to the reader himself; but he closed the book silently. Faith's comment was peculiar.

It wasn't made at first. Her look had come round slowly to the fire and slowly subsided. After sitting a minute so, she made her remark.

"But Mr. Linden, none of that seemed much like Melancholy to me?"

"That may be called the ideal of Melancholy," he said smiling.

"What is an 'ideal'? But oh," said Faith starting up, "it is time to have tea! — What is an 'ideal,' Mr. Linden?"

It was impossible not to laugh a little — but equally impossible to take that laugh amiss.

"The particular mental standard of perfection by which every person measures other people and things; and as that is generally more perfect than reality, the ideal is supposed to exist only in the idea."

She stood pondering the answer, with a somewhat humbled brow.

"I think I know," she said shaking her head a little, — "but I shall have to ask what exactly you mean by a *standard*, Mr. Linden. By and by — I must see to Cindy now."

And she ran off. Cindy presently brought in the tray; and Faith followed, arranging and setting in order everything. The tea did not immediately follow, perhaps the fire had got low, or Mrs. Derrick was not ready, for Faith did not seem expectant. She stood on the rug before the fire, looking into it very soberly and considerately. There was a little abstraction in her figure and air. Suddenly she faced round where she stood.

"Do you feel very tired indeed to-night, Mr. Linden?"

"Not *very* — now," he said smiling. "I have been resting. I was a little more tired than usual when I came home."

Slowly and deliberately she came round behind his chair and stood leaning upon the back of it.

"Mr. Linden — I want to ask you something."

The tone was low and peculiar. It was a very common thing for her to be more or less moved by a little timidity; but now plainly Faith was afraid. It changed her voice, beyond the slight sweet touch that timidity often gave it.

"You know I like to have you, Miss Faith."

"I wanted to ask — if you would like, — or if you wouldn't dislike — if you would have any objection, to read and pray at night — here, with us, — and let Cindy and Mr. Skip come in?"

"I will, certainly," Mr. Linden said: "how could I have any objection? Miss Faith — will you please to come round here and sit down? — Why are you so much afraid of me?" She did not leave her position.

"I didn't know whether you would like it," she said in a very low voice. "I asked mother to ask you, but she wouldn't — though she said she would like to have you do it. I wanted it particularly for mother's sake." — The last words were said little above a whisper.

"I don't see where the fear came from, yet."

She was quite still, quite motionless, behind his chair. He turned a little, so as to see her face, and laid his hand upon hers.

"Will you come round here and tell me, Miss Faith? I shall not let you stand up all the evening."

She was looking, when he saw her, with the least bit of a smile upon a mouth all unbent, and eyes that were full; a very happy, stirred face. It quieted down as soon as he turned; except the smile which played rather more.

"Tell you what, Mr. Linden?" she said not leaving her place.

"What have I done to make myself such an ogre?"

"What is an ogre, Mr. Linden?"

"A ferocious sort of anomaly that everybody is afraid of."

"I don't know what you've done, Mr. Linden," she said half laughing. "I am not enough afraid to hurt anything."

"Enough to hurt me — I don't care about any other thing."

A grave glance of her eye was regretful enough.

"But it's true, Mr. Linden! I was a little afraid to ask what I wasn't sure you would like — that was all."

"Well," he said with a reassuring smile, as he got up and

took hold of both her hands and brought her out of position, "I am not much hurt yet — but I desire that the fear may not increase. And therefore, Miss Faith, I want to have you sit here in the firelight, so that I can keep watch of it."

She smiled, as if it were beyond his ken now, but her words went to another point.

"What time would you like, Mr. Linden?"

"Whatever suits you."

She was silent for a minute or two, with a very happy face, till the door opened. Then she sprang up and received and placed the tea and things which Cindy had brought in. There was a dainty supply to-night, perhaps in consideration of Mr. Linden's first day of out-door work, and in delicate sympathy and reward thereof. And Faith, in her happiest mood though as quiet as a mouse, was an excellent 'ministering spirit' of the tea-table; to-night particularly, for every sense and affection seemed to be on the alert.

"How do you find all the boys, after their month out of school, Mr. Linden?" she said, when waffles and cups of tea were fairly under weigh.

"Very glad to see me — very much afraid I should tire myself; and some a little afraid they might share the fatigue. So things correct each other! — if they had not shewed the last fear, I might have felt the first."

"How did that work?" said Faith laughing a little.

"It *worked* —" said Mr. Linden. "Is that intelligible, Miss Faith?"

Her smile and shake of the head said that it was.

"Is Joe Deacon staying home yet?" said Mrs. Derrick.

"No, he began school again to-day."

"I wonder whether the Squire is going off again," said Mrs. Derrick, — "or whether *he's* going to stay home."

"I have heard nothing of his going away."

"You were going to tell me what exactly a 'standard' is, Mr. Linden? At least!" — said Faith correcting herself, — "I was going to ask you."

"There is a very intimate connexion between the two

things," said Mr. Linden smiling. "A standard, in this sense, is simply some fixed rule of the *ought to be*, by which the *is* must be tried. Standard coin is that made according to the precise government regulation, and is the test of all other in the realm, as to size, weight, and alloy. So of standard weights and measures. For some things we have the Bible standard, — for most, each person has his own."

"Then Mr. Linden," said Faith, "I think my 'ideal' of Melancholy is something disagreeable."

"I don't believe you have any!" said he laughing. "You mean your idea, Miss Faith."

"Do I?" said Faith. "But perhaps you have such a thing, Mr. Linden; isn't it disagreeable?"

"Not at all — and besides I haven't any. But the ideal of Melancholy is about as much like the reality, as a picture of the Tragic Muse is like the fifth act of a tragedy."

That Faith did not know the meaning of tragedy, was a fact which she wisely and self-denyingly kept to herself, and for the present turned her attention to supplying her mother with a fresh waffle. And so with various bits of talk, tea came to an end, and Mrs. Derrick was called out to discuss some important matter with Mr. Skip.

"Mother," said Faith finding her opportunity, "I asked Mr. Linden, and he will do that." — A little shadow came over Mrs. Derrick's face.

"Well, child?" she said gently.

"Mother — I have asked *him*, — will you speak to Mr. Skip and Cindy?"

"I can't child —" said her mother, with the same tone and look. "I'll go in myself, but I can't try to do any more."

"Dear mother —" said Faith, — "I wish you would!"

Her mother turned and kissed her, but the difficulty was clearly not one to be overcome. The whole subject seemed to bring up some painful association.

"He'll call them in himself, if you ask him, child."

"Would it be right to ask him, mother?"

"Why yes!" said Mrs. Derrick — "I don't see why not. One of you must."

With this thought Faith went back to the sitting-room. Clearly there was some strong feeling against her being the one, for after a little sober silent waiting, she spoke.

"Mr. Linden — would you rather I should ask Cindy and Mr. Skip to come in? — or will you?"

He knew, better than she did, how well the question shewed her own wish, and how simple a matter it was to him.

"I will, Miss Faith, if you please. Is this the hour you have fixed upon?"

"I think so," she said, — "if you like it; because by and by they will be sleepy." And Mr. Linden at once proceeded to the kitchen.

A busy murmur of tongues, and bright firelight glancing from keyhole and crevice, guided him through the narrow passage which, sooth to say, he had never trod before, to the door of the kitchen; the latch of which yielded on slight persuasion, and Mr. Linden walked in. Supper was over there, too, and the dishes were washed and put away, and Cindy with dishcloth in hand was rubbing down the kitchen table. In one corner of the hearth sat Mr. Skip on a half bushel measure, a full corn basket beside him, an empty one in front, his hands busy with the shelling process; this hard work being diversified and enlivened with the continual additions he made to a cob house on the hearth. But, cob in hand, Mr. Skip paused when Mr. Linden came in, and looked up at this unusual apparition from under an extraordinary hat which drooped on all sides of his face, as if like its wearer it had long given up all idea of keeping up appearances. The face itself was strong, shrewd, apt. And so Mr. Skip looked at Mr. Linden. Cindy on her part, did nothing but wring the dishcloth and shake it out again, entirely oblivious of the greeting with which Mr. Linden favoured both parties; and she listened to the words he said about the corn, as if they had been Greek — double distilled. Those words were few.

"Mr. Skip," he said then, "I think that so long as God

keeps us here together every day, we ought to thank him for it together every night. I want you and Cindy to come into the parlour and let us begin to do it now."

"Hey?" said Mr. Skip, between want of understanding and want of belief in the testimony of his ears. Mr. Linden repeated his words, with a composed distinctness that could leave no manner of doubt.

"Well!" — said Mr. Skip. "What do you want us for to do?"

"Come into the parlour."

"I s'pose we'll be to come," — said Mr. Skip, dropping his cob and getting up and straightening himself. "Will you have us in now?"

"Yes," Mr. Linden answered, and led the way.

"Go along, Cindy!" said Mr. Skip in undertone. "S'pose it don't take fur to see into this."

Cindy obeyed, but without seeing 'fur' into anything — even the parlour, though she tried for it. There was not very much to see. Mrs. Derrick (with a little shadow of recollective sorrow) had placed the old Bible by the lamp, and now sat leaning her head on her hand and did not look up as they came in. Faith's face was one of grave joy; but the gravity was so quiet that the joy was beyond the ken of so dull a vision as Cindy's. She sat with clasped hands on a low seat beyond the fire. And Cindy at last fixed her attention upon Mr. Linden, with only an occasional roll of her eyes towards Mr. Skip.

It was a long time since such a service had been in that house, — a time at first swept by a storm of sorrow, then calmed and quieted into a stillness which had grown more and more bright, year by year. Whatever sunshine those years had seen, came from Faith; but that other faith, which should make even her more precious, had been unknown. And the words of the reading and prayer to-night, were to Mrs. Derrick like the renewing of things so long past, that she could scarce bear it; and different as Mr. Linden was

from any one she had ever known, that Christian family likeness almost, to her feeling, transformed him.

It was a very simple matter to him, truly, — why not? — Why should it ever be anything else? or why, when the fear of God is on the tongue should the fear of man be in the heart? Yet it was even more the love of God than the fear, that his hearers perceived that night. Simple in word and tone and manner, it was the simplicity of a feeling so full and strong that it needed no capillary tubes of speech to carry it upward. The prayer ended, and the retreating steps on their way along the kitchen passage, Mrs. Derrick came up to Faith, and putting her arms round her kissed first one cheek and then the other — then turned and left the room. And Faith sat still, with that joy filling her heart so full that her head bent with the weight of it.

One other comment she was destined to hear that night.

"I must say, Miss Faith," said Cindy, "I like these new notions firstrate! I always did say my prayers afore I went to bed, and I'm free to confess this saves a deal of trouble."

CHAPTER XXX.

The quiet of that very peaceful evening was for a short time interrupted by a call from Dr. Harrison. The doctor came, he said, to see how Mr. Linden felt after his day's work; and to tell Faith that his exhibition was in readiness for her and only waited a sunny day and her presence. It was agreed that if the sun did not fail of shewing himself the next afternoon, Faith should not.

Tuesday was fair, and the afternoon came on brilliant with sunbeams. But the doctor's steps did not reach Mrs. Derrick's door by some minutes so soon as he had purposed they should.

Passing down the main street of Pattaquasset, Dr. Harrison descried before him the well known figure of Squire Stoutenburgh, and the less familiar outlines of Squire Deacon. And the doctor's near approach procured him the favour of an in-

troduction to the latter gentleman, — either because the Squire desired it, or because the other Squire was tired of his companion and wanted to be off — which he was, as soon as the introduction was over. For in Mr. Stoutenburgh's eyes the buttonhole of Dr. Harrison's soft coat was no more precious (to say the least) than that of his own grey Rough and Ready.

"Squire Deacon is anxious about the state of Mr. Linden's health, doctor," he said, — "I refer him to you."

The doctor made a slight inclination, graceful as all his inclinations were, but also slight; intimating that he would have the honour of satisfying Mr. Deacon's inquiries but desired nothing more of him.

"How's he getting along?" said Squire Deacon — feeling the social duty thus imposed upon him.

"There is hope that he will be restored to his pristine state of strength in the course of a few weeks, sir."

"A few weeks!" said Squire Deacon. "Why he's in school again, ain't he?"

"He has gone in a carriage," said the doctor, who for some unaccountable reason had taken a fit of perversity, — "I understand he was in school yesterday."

"Did you know him afore he come here, doctor?"

"I had not that honour, sir, till I came here myself."

"Well I never saw anybody as did," said Squire Deacon. — "I s'pose he comes from *somewhere*."

"I doubt it," said Dr. Harrison with the slightest possible elevation of his eyebrows for an instant. Squire Deacon, however, was not just the fool Dr. Harrison took him for; of which fact a little gleam in his eyes gave notice.

"'Taint extraordinary *you* don't like him, doctor," he said carelessly. "Mr. Linden's a fine man, but 'most any pair o' wheels is one too many in some roads."

"I never followed a wheelbarrow, sir," said the doctor. "I suppose, from your allusion, you have. May I be honoured with your further commands?"

"Wheelbarrows have only one wheel, mostly," said Squire Deacon composedly.

"You know better than I, sir. Might I enquire why you are anxious about the state of Mr. Linden's health?"

"Don't know as I said I was anxious —" said Squire Deacon. "When a man's lived in a place as long as he has, it's nothing wonderful if folks ask whether he's going to hold on. All the women in my house think he's dead and buried, now."

"Ah! He's a favourite in that line, is he?"

"Other lines just as much — for all I know," said the Squire. "Can't say I ever just went in for all Mr. Simlins says — nor all Parson Somers says, neither, — can't help that, doctor, if he *is* one o' your folks."

"What have you against him?"

"I don't say nothing against him," said Squire Deacon, — "except he's a fine man. Maybe *you* think that is."

"Is there anything further you would like to say on any subject, sir?"

"Not much, I guess, if *that's* the time o' day," said Squire Deacon looking at him with a queer little bit of a smile. "'Taint useful to get stirred up that way, doctor, just because a man wishes you a good journey. But I can just as easy wish you another overturn — I s'pose you're pretty sure to get one or t'other out o' the horses. It's all one to me — and I dare say it is to everybody else."

"What is your name, sir?" said the doctor standing and looking at him in a sort of mazed consideration.

"My name's Sam Deacon," — said the Squire with his peculiar sort of sullen composure. "Your father and I've always been friends, anyhow."

"Then Mr. Deacon will you have the goodness to understand that I am not an agent for the transaction of Mr. Linden's affairs; but as I am a friend of his, I will inform him that you are interested in the subject. That is all, sir?"

"I'll go bail for the first part of that!" said Squire Deacon. "But it's your affairs I'm talkin' of — not his'n. And I s'pose I've as good a right as all the rest of Pattaquasset — and give no offence, neither. I was goin' to make you my compliments,

doctor — that's all; and if you don't think you'll ever want 'em, why there's no harm done — and enough said. All I want to know is, what do you get so stirred up for?"

"Is that all?" said the doctor, as if he had a mind to know the whole before giving an answer.

"All what?" said Squire Deacon.

"All that you wish to communicate?"

"I haven't communicated anything yet," said the Squire. "I guess you knew all *that* before."

"Well," said the doctor, half laughing, though his expression had changed more than once during the last five minutes, — "then my answer is easy. In the first place, Mr. Deacon, I have no affairs — therefore it is impossible to talk about them. In the second place, when I am in want of your compliments I will send you mine. In the third place, — I declare I am at a loss how to answer you; for the only thing I ever get stirred up for, is my breakfast! Good afternoon! —"

Staying no more civilities, the doctor made the best of his way to Mrs. Derrick's. Faith was ready for him, and more gently with her he set out on the road back again. It was not a time of day to meet people — one familiar face however they did meet, — Squire Deacon. His eye did not seek Faith's face, but rested on the doctor with full effect.

Arrived at the Judge's house, the doctor led her to the library, and there unlocked the door of a little cabinet room. On a table in the window, standing in the full sunshine, was the object of their visit. It was simply a fine little Aquarium. More delightfully new to Faith's eyes nothing could be; as the same eyes shewed. While they explored the wonders of the box, the doctor at his ease proceeded to unfold to her the various meanings of them. He enlarged upon the habits and characters of the several inmates of the Aquarium; he explained to her the philosophy of keeping the balance of vegetable and animal life and thereby preserving both; he told which creature lived upon which other; what office they severally, some of them, performed for the small section of Ocean in

which they lived and its vitrified shores; and then taking up the subject of Sea anemones, the doctor told stories, of natural truth, that with these living specimens before her entranced Faith out of all knowledge of place or time. Dr. Harrison asked no more. He gave her what she liked, and with admirable tact abstained from putting himself forward; any further than a quick eye, excellent speech, and full and accurate mind must make themselves known, and most gentle and graceful attention make itself felt.

"Do you suppose," said he, when Faith was absorbedly watching the Anemones feed, — "that Mrs. Derrick would give this thing house-room?"

Faith looked, but half comprehending.

"I am not always here," said the doctor carelessly, as he was supplying another bit of flesh to the voracious flower, — "and I should like to have it somewhere that it would be taken care of. If I left it to Sophy for a week, I should expect to find on my return that the vegetables and fishes had eaten up each other. Don't you admire that crab?"

"Very much," said Faith. "This little fish is just like some of the shells down on the shore."

"He came from the shore somewhere," said the doctor, — "little monster! The ocean world isn't much better than the world of earth, apparently, Miss Derrick."

"Do you think the earth-world is like that?" said Faith.

"Don't you?"

"I don't know what it is like."

"If you will permit me to say so, I hope you never will — any further than as you choose to make this a miniature of that. And things in miniature — are much less," said the doctor abstractedly, looking at the Anemone. "Would you like to have this little ocean box in your house for awhile, Miss Faith?—it could just as well as not. Indeed it would be rather a benefit to me."

"O I should like it!" said Faith. "But I should be afraid of its getting broken, Dr. Harrison."

"I am not afraid," said he. "It would be in less danger

there than here. As I told you, Sophy neither knows nor cares anything about such things; and she would either kill them with kindness or forget them altogether—most likely do both alternately. But with you they would be safe, for the simple reason that you love them."

The sunbeams had left the window before Faith was at all aware of the passing away of the afternoon. And then, for once to her joy, Miss Harrison could not be found. They set out to walk home, and had got half way when a little rush of footsteps came up behind them, and Reuben and Sam passed by, arm in arm; or rather half by—then paused and said good evening.

"O have you seen Mr. Linden to-night, Dr. Harrison?" said Sam.

"Good evening, sir!" said the doctor. "Have I the honour of knowing you?"

"I should think you might," said Sam, in a tone not at all displeased — "but it don't signify much. Have you seen him to-night, doctor?"

"*I* should think I might, too," said Dr. Harrison looking coolly over the "young giant." "Allow me to observe, that 'to-night' is not come yet."

"Did you ever!" said Sam in an aside to Reuben, who had stood perfectly still without speaking. "Well any time since he got home then, sir?"

"No, sir."

"Have you, Miss Faith?" said Reuben.

"No, Reuben — I am just going home. What's the matter?"

"Why he fainted in school — that's all," said Sam, — "he said there was nothing the matter. Only we were going down to see how he got home, and I thought maybe the doctor might tell us first." And not staying for more words the two boys walked on a few steps, then set off and soon ran themselves out of sight.

The other two quickened their walk, the doctor moderating his steps however to suit the strength of his companion.

But she soon took the lead, and Mrs. Derrick's house was reached in as short a space of time as the ground might be travelled without a speed which Faith did not dare assume.

There was nothing alarming in the little parlour. Mrs. Derrick sat knitting; Mr. Linden had been reading, but now was talking —half laughing, half chiding— with the two boys who stood before him. Reuben stood silent, smiling a little; Sam's energy was at work.

Faith came in quietly, with a face to which all her quick walk had not brought back the colour. She said nothing. But the doctor's tongue was free.

"Why what's this, Linden?"

"This is — Linden —" said that gentleman coolly. "No boys — go off, — I think I can live without seeing either of you again till to-morrow. What's the matter, Dr. Harrison?"

"Just and precisely what I was asking," said the doctor; while Faith glided to her mother and sitting down by her whispered enquiry. But Mrs. Derrick knew nothing — had heard nothing, apparently.

"It's for you to state the case —" said Mr. Linden. "You speak as if you had a warrant of arrest in your pocket."

"Why!" said the doctor, standing and looking down upon him, — "here's a wind that has blown from nowhere! Do you want me to lodge information against yourself?"

"*I* don't wish to lodge any."

"Linden," said the doctor changing his tone to one of serious kindly interest, while Faith's eyes from her more distant seat waited for the answer, — "what is the matter? What made you faint to-day?"

"What nonsense have those boys been talking?" said Mr. Linden — but his look carried the charge a little beyond the range of his words. "I was faint for awhile — not quite in a 'deadly swownd,' however."

"That young scapegrace said and declared you had fainted."

"They are so used to their own red cheeks, they think red is 'the only colour,'" said Mr. Linden. "However, I believe

he spoke true — but it was nothing worth speaking of, after all."

"What was the cause?"

"I presumed a little upon the successful way in which I got through yesterday — tried to do a little too much to-day, had one or two things to try me — and so. Which of my boys do you honour with that title of scapegrace?"

"You musn't do so again," said the doctor seriously.

"There was no malice prepense to-day," said Mr. Linden. "What have you been about all the afternoon? — I expect to hear that you have sailed up the Great Pyramid in a canal boat, or coasted Japan in a Chinese lantern."

"Nearly right," said the doctor. "We have been enacting the part of the wise men of Gotham — I can't imagine where I ever heard of them! — who went to sea in a tub."

"Went to see — what? —" said Mr. Linden laughing.

"Went to Se—vast—a—pool!" said the doctor with perfect gravity. "I hope you're better!"

"Don't I look well?"

"If I were to take the votes on that subject," said the doctor, "I presume the verdict would be unanimous. But looks are proverbially — unsatisfactory! Do you know what damage you have done me by your exploit this afternoon?"

"I should be very glad to hear."

"Why you have brought me into discredit and disfavour with half Pattaquasset, man, because I have let you go out too soon — don't you see? Mrs. Derrick has already laid it to her account against me — which is getting to be a score I shall never dare to foot up."

Faith had left the room for a minute, and coming back again began to make ready the table for tea. Dr. Harrison's eyes followed her. She was not looking as she had looked at his anemones; quiet, sweet, and grave, she went round gathering up the books, and arranging the cups and plates. But the doctor, though asked, would not stay. He went off and the tea was brought in.

"Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "if you are half as ready for that exercise as I am, we shall get on superbly to-night."

She almost started.

"You, Mr. Linden! Oh you're not fit for it!"

"Not fit for it! — Miss Faith, how can you say that to me?"

"Let it be so to-night, Mr. Linden!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind, Miss Faith, by your leave. You know I can rest here most comfortably, and make you work — after the same fashion, I hope. I am a little afraid," he said looking at her, "that you are working too much."

"Why, Mr. Linden? How could I?"

"By not keeping your studies well balanced with fresh air."

"O no!" she said smiling. "The work is a great deal better than the fresh air. Besides, I have been out to-day."

"You might as well say that bread is a great deal better than water. Yes, you have been out to-day, that is one good thing. And I shall try to throw somewhat into that scale myself, if I live. But I want all the books to-night, Miss Faith — and to-morrow, you know, is a half holiday, but you need not expect to have one."

Faith's tea went on after that in a manifestly different manner. Expeditiously the table was cleared after tea! And if ever Faith wrought with eager care to do perfections and save her teacher every word and thought that could be spared, she did it then. So the exercise was written, with most earnest guarding against anything 'german' or 'sophisticated' in her letters. Indeed Faith's handwriting, by dint of taking pains, was fast growing into stiff correctness — not without a certain beauty, of promise at least, but stiff still. And with all her other lessons, of thought or memory; what earnest quick effort could do was done that night, and done upon the back of a sound preparation.

Mr. Linden however did not spare himself words, not much, and care not at all; watching and guiding his pretty scholar with equal gravity, gentleness, and attention; rarely

diverging from the business view of the subject, unless Faith grew timid or frightened, in which case he indulged himself with making her laugh, and so brought her back to business again. What views Mrs. Derrick took of the two, thus engaged, it would be hard to say; save that they were wondrous pleasant ones — a little puzzled, a little thoughtful, loving and pleased to the last degree. How much she studied those two faces! — not Faith herself bestowed more care upon what she was about. But Faith came to conclusions — Mrs. Derrick never did; wanting help from the very person who cleared the path of learning for her daughter. His face — its gravity, its changes — she could not read; but she liked the study.

The doctor's plan about the Aquarium was excessively distasteful to Mrs. Derrick. She read the meaning and grounds of it, which Faith entirely failed to read; but then to give them to her was hardly an advisable thing. So the Aquarium came, after a few days; and Faith having found that Mr. Linden could give her some help, if necessary, in the care of it, relieved her mind of all concern about the responsibility and took the full good of the trust. In a sunny window it was placed, and many a happy minute between the times of other things Faith stood or sat there to watch the unfolding and shrinking Anemones, and the restless, eager, wild lives of the other and more distinctly animal inhabitants of this little section of Ocean. The only uncomfortable thing about it was that other people sometimes saw it and heard how it came there; and other people, Faith knew, drew very ridiculous inferences from nothing. And though ridiculous they were disagreeable. But however, *she* knew best how it came there and how simple a matter it was; and it was never the way of her simplicity to trouble itself overmuch about ridiculous things.

Another person, it may be remarked, knew how it got there; and he found it pleasant to come and see it sometimes. This was generally in the afternoon, now, when Mr. Linden was not at home and Faith was not occupied in household duties. Pleasant talks were held over the Aquarium; for

there was never an end of things that might be told of old and new discoveries connected with what was in it. The conversations diverged often to other matters, religious or scientific as the case might be; and were clever, bright, interesting, or amusing accordingly — and invariably.

And so the time wore on towards the 29th. But in the fourth week of Mr. Linden's return to school duties, Faith began to have a new lesson — or rather she had it once and practised upon it many times. That once was at the end of a Wednesday afternoon, in exquisite Indian summer weather; when other subjects being dismissed for the time, Mr. Linden gave his scholar an interesting and precise account of the process of respiration; passing thence to the obvious benefits of fresh air, and finally requesting her to put on her things and come out and take them. After which, it may be observed, Faith was never heard to say that studies were "a great deal better than fresh air," — often as the walk was repeated.

The other lessons made beautiful headway. Even the French talks at dinner. That was harder to Faith than any other trial to which she had been put. She shrank from it with great shrinking. But the desire to please her teacher overcame even fear. Rather than not do that, — Faith ventured, right or wrong; and once fairly launched, of course, with his good help and her own endeavours, soon got into smoother sailing.

Mr. Linden and the doctor now met not often; the doctor making his visits, as has been said, during school time. They met oftenest where the doctor went seldomest, — in those rooms where Dr. Harrison did sometimes let his profession call him, where Mr. Linden was drawn by somewhat beyond profession. Sometimes this intercourse was only of the eye, — sometimes they walked home together; the curious friendship between them deepening, as it seemed, from all sources.

Come home when Mr. Linden would, his room looked as if somebody had just stepped out of it. The fire was always in its best beauty; the hearth guiltless of ashes; the tempera-

ture genial whatever the weather out of doors might be; the books, the papers, the table, in their wonted order or disorder, as fresh as if dust never fell. But the fairy of the place was always out of sight.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The 29th of November came on Wednesday, which permitted Mrs. Stoutenburgh to have her dinner at an earlier hour than would else have been possible. To this dinner the two older guests were invited — the boys were only to come to supper; and four o'clock was the time.

Till near three, studies and reading were in full force, but then other duties claimed attention.

"If I could only sit next you at dinner, Miss Faith," Mr. Linden said as he shut up the books, "we could talk French all the time! — but there is no hope of that. And Miss Faith—" he said as she turned to go upstairs, "do you know that all the things on my table are not in their proper place?"

Very much wondering, Faith was for a moment at a loss.

"What is wrong, Mr. Linden?"

"I would not give it so harsh a name, Miss Faith — only I thought perhaps you would go in there before I come up and see that all is left just as usual, — if you would be so good."

Faith went up, querying with herself whether Cindy could perhaps have been in there and committed some dire damage — or *what* it could be.

What could it! — if ever a room was scrupulously in order, that was; and the table — it had not been stirred, nor a book upon it, since Faith's arranging hands had been there. Even writing implements were not laid about, as they often were, — the table was just as usual. Unless ——

Yes, in front of the books stood a glass of water, and therein one dark velvet rose, truly of a "Cramoisi supérieure," failing to support itself upon its own green leaves, laid its face half coquettishly and half wearily upon dark sprigs of heliotrope and myrtle. Thence it looked at Faith. And Faith

looked at it, with a curious smile of recognition, and yet of doubt, — whether *that* could possibly be what he meant. But she was to see that all things were "left just as usual;" it did not admit of a serious question. So lifting the glass and the rose, Faith and it went off together.

Faith's best dress, of course put on for this occasion, was a black silk. She had thought that a little extravagant at the time it was got; but Mrs. Derrick would have it. It was made with the most absolute plainness, high in the neck, where the invariable little white ruffle graced the white throat; but the sleeves were short, and similar white ruffles softened the dividing line between them and the well rounded fair arms. Her hair was as usual, her feet were as usual, only the shoes were of fresh neatness; but when Faith had with eyes that saw only them, not herself, fastened the rose and myrtle on the bosom of her dress, a little figure stood there that in its soft angles and exquisite propriety of attire would have been noted in any circle of splendour, and might have satisfied the most fastidious lover of elegance. Wrapped up and hooded Faith went down stairs, and Mr. Linden put her in the Stoutenburgh carriage, which rolled off to the mansion of the same name in a very short space of time.

In solitary grandeur Faith was ushered into Mrs. Stoutenburgh's bedroom, where first the fire kept her company, and then Mrs. Stoutenburgh herself came in from another door and both unwrapped her and wrapt her up! But when all that could be done was done, Mrs. Stoutenburgh ran off again, and told Faith, laughing, that she hadn't seen yet her — and was all ready for her in the parlour. Faith being left to herself stepped out into the passage, where Mr. Linden was standing with folded arms before a window that looked out upon the closing November day. Faith came softly up beside him.

"I've seen Mrs. Stoutenburgh," she said, "but she says she hasn't seen me. Are your flowers right now, Mr. Linden?"

"Miss Faith! why do you wear velvet shoes?" — he said turning full upon her. "You have not been down stairs?"

"No, certainly. I saw Mrs. Stoutenburgh up here."

"Then shall I have the pleasure of taking you down? — I see nothing that is not right," he added smiling.

It was rather an odd new thing to Faith, to be taken down, or in, anywhere. The form of having a gentleman's arm was something rather startling. But she did not shew it. Down stairs they went, into the glowing parlour, where Faith was met and greeted by Mrs. Stoutenburgh de nouveau.

"Ah Miss Faith!" said the Squire as he gave her his salutation, "how extravagant you are to add roses to roses in that style! Don't you know it's a waste of material?"

"No, sir. I shall use it all up."

"I should like to see you after you get through!" said Mr. Stoutenburgh laughing. "Ask Mr. Linden if it's not waste."

Mr. Linden however entirely declined to assent to any such proposition, — nay, even hinted that if any one was to be charged with wasting roses just then, it was the Squire himself.

"Yes, I think so too!" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, — "but how funnily you always see through things and turn them about!"

"Roses are not *very* opaque things to see through," he answered smiling, while Mrs. Stoutenburgh rescued Faith and putting her arm round her drew her off towards the sofa. Where Faith was glad to get at a distance from the rose-consumers. She felt rather nervous.

"Where is Sam?" she asked. "This is his day, isn't it?"

"He was here a minute ago," said his mother, — "I guess he ran off when he heard you coming. He takes fits of being bashful once in a while, — they don't last long. Your mother wasn't afraid to let you come with our horses, was she?"

"No ma'am," Faith said, — "not at all. But she hasn't got back her old trust in horses and carriages generally. I wish she had."

"I don't —" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, — "they're not to be trusted generally, child. Has your horse got well yet?"

"Not well. Mr. Skip say's he's better, but we can't use him."

"Well I wanted to talk to you about that — Mr. Stoutenburgh's been at me to do it this month. You know we've always got more horses on hand than we can use — and there's one of 'em that would just suit you. Won't you let him stand in your stable this winter? — and give Crab a chance."

"O no, Mrs. Stoutenburgh! — thank you!" said Faith. "I dare say Crab will get better — it won't be necessary; and you know we don't ride much in winter. You're very kind to think of it."

"There you are — as usual!" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh. "I'm always afraid to ask you anything, you keep such magnifying glasses. But now Faith, listen to reason. Not ride in winter! — why it's the very time for riding, if there's snow; and you could drive Jerry, or your mother could, just as well as Crab — he's as quiet as he can be. At the same time," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh with a little dance in her eyes, "if anybody else drives him, he *can* go a little faster."

"I'll tell mother how good you are, Mrs. Stoutenburgh. It isn't my business to give answers for her. But did you ever see me drive?"

"Not horses," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh laughing.

"Not anything else, I am sure? I used to want to go after the cows, but mother never would let me."

But whatever Mrs. Stoutenburgh meant she did not explain, for dinner was announced, and the Squire came up to take possession of Faith again; receiving his wife's little whispered "I've done it!" with all her own satisfaction.

In the dining-room Sam was at last visible, but the bashful fit had not gone off, and Faith's black silk was even more distracting than her white muslin. Her greeting of him was simple enough to have been reassuring.

"I hope you will be as happy a great many times as you are to-day, Sam," she said as she shook hands with him. "On the 29th of November, I mean."

Perhaps Sam thought that doubtful — perhaps impossible, — perhaps undesirable. At all events his words were few; and though he was permitted the post of honour at Faith's side, he did not do much for her entertainment at first.

The dinner itself, service and style and all included, was sufficiently like the Squire and his wife. Handsome and substantial, free, bountiful, and with a sort of laughing air of good cheer about it which more ceremony would have covered up. There was no lack of talk, either, — all the company having the ability therefor, and then, at least, the inclination. But if Mr. Linden now and then called Sam out of his abstraction, so did the Squire attack Faith; giving her a little sword play to parry as best she might.

"Miss Faith," he said, "do you know to what a point you are, day by day, winding up the curiosity of this town of Pattaquasset?"

"I, sir!" said Faith, apparently, by her eye and air, occupying the place of the centre of motion to all this curiosity; — the point of absolute rest.

"My dear," said the Squire, "they say two things about you! The first is that you never go out! Now don't trouble yourself to contradict that, but just tell me the *reason*. We're all friends here, you know."

"Why I go out very often indeed, Mr. Stoutenburgh!" said Faith.

"Didn't I tell you not to contradict me? Ah Miss Faith! — young ladies never will take advice! Well — the first thing is, as I said, that you never go out. The second," said the Squire laughing, "is — that you do!"

"Well sir," said Faith merrily, — "they can't both be true — and there isn't anything very bad about either of them. Nor very curious, either, I think."

"What I should like to know," said Mr. Linden, "is, who keeps watch at the gate?"

"Squire Deacon does, for one," said Sam promptly. "I see him there often enough."

"When you come to relieve the guard?" said Mr. Linden smiling. And the laugh was turned for the moment, rather to Sam's confusion.

"So that's what the Squire's come back for, is it?" said Mr. Stoutenburgh. "I thought somebody was to blame for his going away."

"Nobody was *much* to blame," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh.

"I had a long talk with Sam the other day — Sam Deacon, I mean," said the Squire, "and he was keen to get acquainted with Dr. Harrison. And as the doctor came along just then, I gave him a chance. I guess the doctor blessed me for it! — I did him. By the way, Miss Faith, I s'pose you've got acquainted with the doctor by this time?"

"Yes sir — very well —" Faith said quietly, though she felt the ground uneasy and unsafe.

"Well what sort of a chap is he? — up to anything besides running away with all he can lay his hands on?"

"Don't you know him, Mr. Stoutenburgh?"

"Can't say I do, Miss Faith, — it rather strikes me he's not anxious I should."

"How can he be anxious, sir, when you are not?" said Mr. Linden. "Isn't that expecting too much?"

The Squire laughed.

"I don't expect too much of him," he said, — "and don't you expect too little. After all, I'd as soon take a boy's mind as a man's — and he aint popular among the boys. I thought he would be, after that exhibition — but he aint."

Which remark Mr. Linden knew to be true, though he did not say so.

"Well, Mr. Stoutenburgh! if you don't like him why *do* you talk about him?" said his wife. "Faith — you can play blind man's buff, I'm sure?"

"Wait a bit, — wait a bit," said the Squire — "I'm not ready to be blinded yet, if she is. You ladies are always in such a hurry! Now Mr. Linden and I want to have our ideas cleared up. What sort of a man is the doctor,

Miss Faith? You say you know him 'very well,' — do you like him 'very much'?"

This shot brought Faith to a stand and obliged her, to be sure, to 'shew her colours,' which she did bravely. Nevertheless she faced the Squire and answered steadily.

"I like him a good deal, Mr. Stoutenburgh — in some respects very much."

"Hum —" said the Squire, as he cut a persuasive piece of duck and put it on her plate. "Well wouldn't you like to tell me, my dear, what you mean by 'some respects'? — That's Mrs. Stoutenburgh's word, and I never could find out yet."

"I suppose it means different things in different cases," said Faith smiling.

"Did you ever?" — said the Squire, taking a general survey of the table, which began with Faith and ended with Mr. Linden. "Aint that half of creation up to anything? I tell you what, Miss Faith, if *I*'d been in that meadow 'tother day, I'd have made Mazeppa of the doctor in no time, — Sam hasn't learnt to put his history in practice yet. And besides," said the Squire, with a peculiarly slow, innocent enunciation, "he never likes to do anything that would displease Mr. Linden!"

"Mr. Stoutenburgh!" said his wife, though she was laughing merrily herself, "Can't you be quiet? Faith, why don't you answer me?"

"What, Mrs. Stoutenburgh?" — Faith turned towards her a face from which, gentle as it was, the smile had disappeared.

"You play blind man's buff, don't you, dear?"

"When I can," said Faith.

"The real question, Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, whose grave unmoved look — unmoved unless by a little fear that she might be annoyed — would have been some help to her during her cross-examination if she had seen it, — "the real question is, whether you are willing to play to-night."

"I am as willing as can be," said Faith.

"I don't know whether they'll want to play it," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, "but they may; and Sam's never content unless I'm in the fun, whatever it is."

"Of course Miss Faith will play," said the Squire, — "she never refuses to please anybody."

"Mr. Linden said he would," said Sam.

"But how shall you and I manage, Faith?" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh. "They'd tell us in a minute by our dresses — as there are only two of us."

Faith pondered this difficulty with an amused face.

"Sam must lend us some of his jackets or coats, Mrs. Stoutenburgh. Our heads are the worst, — or mine is — you and Sam might be mistaken for each other."

"But there'd be no use in Miss Faith's disguising herself," said Sam naively, "because she's so sweet."

"You wouldn't have her disguise that, would you, Sam?" said Mr. Linden laughing.

"What a boy!" said his mother, — "and what a reflection upon me!"

"Why I meant her flowers!" said Sam, — "you needn't all laugh so. I don't mean either that I didn't mean —" but what more he meant Sam left unsaid, which did not much stay the laughter.

"I will appoint two or three boys to play the part of the pigeon in hawking," said Mr. Linden, — "Miss Faith might get tired of being caught, if not of running away."

"How do you know that, Mr. Linden?" she said a little archly.

"Truly," he answered, "I know it not — but most things are possible, even in blind man's buff. And all boys are not provided with silk gloves. But you shall not complain of not being caught — I promise you that."

"Again!" she said with another soft flash of her eye, though now she coloured. "Don't you understand, Mr. Linden, that I don't intend to let anybody catch me? — if I can help it."

"Miss Faith, I have the most entire confidence in your intentions!"

Faith kept her energies for action, and said no more. And in a very harmonious temper the whole party left the dinner table and went back to the fire-lit parlour. All but Sam, who went to be ready for his particular guests in another room.

His place was presently supplied by a new-comer. There was a step in the hall — then the parlour door opened, and a little lady with a shawl round her shoulders, came in.

"Good evening!" she said in a very cheery voice. "Why I didn't expect to find so many of you! Is it a party, Mrs. Stoutenburgh, — and shall I go away? or will you let me come in, now I've got here?"

"Come in, come in, Miss Essie, and make it a party," said the Squire; while Mrs. Stoutenburgh took off the shawl and answered,

"Go away? why of course not! It's only Sam's birth-day — you're not afraid of boys, I guess."

"I'm not afraid of anything," said Miss Essie, and her bright black eyes said it too. "Isn't that Mr. Linden? — yes, I thought so. And Faith Derrick! — my! child, how you're dressed. What sort of a party have you got, Mrs. S.?"

"Why, boys!" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, while Mr. Linden said,

"Good evening, Miss Essie — you know I am one of them."

"Are you? I don't know much about you, except by hear-say, you know. I am glad you are here to-night. I shall study you, Mr. Linden."

Mr. Linden bowed his acknowledgments.

"Will you want my help, Miss Essie?"

She laughed. "Come!" said she — "don't get on too fast! I am beginning to like you already. What are the boys doing, Mrs. Stoutenburgh? Sam's birthday, did you say?"

"Yes, it's Sam's birthday, — I don't suppose they're doing much yet except coming," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh. "What they will do, no mortal can say."

"And you'll let them do anything! It must be a nice thing to be a boy, with such a mother as Mrs. Stoutenburgh, Mr. Linden."

His "yes" came readily enough, but was unaccompanied with any other word whatever. Mrs. Stoutenburgh's "Do hush!" — was sufficiently energetic though very low.

"How old is Sam?" was the instant question, as if the whisper had referred to him.

"O Sam can't get beyond fourteen till he's twenty," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh laughing. "I suppose by that time I sha'n't care how old he is."

"I know who thinks he's a handsome fellow!" said Miss Essie shaking her head, — "and that's not you, Mrs. S. *I* know he's a smart one, for I pinned a blue ribband to his coat once. I wonder if he loves me properly for it. — Faith Derrick, how come you to be here, child?"

"Why because Mrs. Stoutenburgh asked me," said Faith, answering this sudden address with some surprise.

"Wrong!" said Miss Essie. "There's some mistake about it. I've just come from hearing you talked of."

"Whom did you hear, Miss Essie?" said the Squire. "Come — give up your authority."

"I was at Judge Harrison's," said Miss Essie, after a considerative look of her black eyes at the Squire; — "and that's all I am going to tell you, Mr. Stoutenburgh! Mr. Linden, what do you think of the propriety of people's talking about people?"

"I think well of the propriety, when it exists."

"Well what do you think of its existence? Honestly, now. I want to get at your opinion."

"I think its existence is rather limited and precarious, Miss Essie," said Mr. Linden smiling. "It is one of those things that may be said to have a delicate constitution."

"Well," said Miss Essie again, smiling too, both with lips and eyes, — "how could people get along in such a place as Pattaquasset, for instance, without it? People must talk. And it is so pleasant to know that Mrs. Stoutenburgh's son

Sam is fifteen years old and had a party on his birthday; and that Mr. Linden and Miss Derrick were there and eat roast turkey; — and to know that Miss Essie de Staff went to New York to get a new carpet for her best room and what the new style is; — and that Miss Faith Derrick was run away with and brought home again, and went through adventures. How could we do without talking of these things? Now perhaps you will say it's immoral; but I'm in favour of a *possible* morality; and I say, how could Pattaquasset get along without all this?"

"Pattaquasset could get along without some of the things, to start with," said the Squire. "I don't know what you call 'pleasant,' Miss Essie, but I never was so angry in my life — since some rascal told me Mrs. Stoutenburgh was going to marry somebody else," he added laughing.

"But I say," said Miss Essie, "how could Pattaquasset get along without *talking* of these things? and I ask Mr. Linden. I want to know his opinion."

"I will not say that it could," said Mr. Linden. — "Miss Essie, you know Pattaquasset better than I do."

"Well do you think there is any harm in talking of them?"

"What do you think of the modern definition of a young lawyer, Miss Essie — 'a man who is where he has no business to be, because he has no business where he ought to be'?"

Miss Essie laughed, and laughed.

"Don't Sam get along fast with his reading and writing, Mr. Stoutenburgh?"

"Always did —" said the Squire; "and with everything else too. What are you talking about? I lost that. I'd gone off to that rascal —"

Miss Essie's laugh rang out again and her eyes danced.

"That rascal! Now for shame, Mr. Stoutenburgh! You know better. I wonder if you never had young horses yourself and took Mrs. Stoutenburgh to ride, too. Now I like him very much. Mr. Linden, *you* know Dr. Harrison, don't you?"

"I should — a little."

"Well aren't you a judge of character? Do you think he deserves to be called a rascal?"

But Squire Stoutenburgh prevented the answer. "I wish you'd just stop and let me catch up with you, Miss Essie," he said. "Now before we go any further, whoever said he *was* a rascal? — *I* didn't."

"Did you mean somebody else, Mr. Stoutenburgh?"

"That's the way you talk over pleasant things!" said the Squire. "If I hadn't hallooed after you, Miss Essie, I should have had a challenge from the doctor before morning — or a shot, — that's getting to be the fashion."

"Do you think Dr. Harrison is that kind of man?" said Miss Essie. "Mr. Linden, what kind of man do you think he is? You can tell better than the Squire, and I want to know."

"Miss Essie! — he is my friend and I am his, — you cannot expect me to give you Dr. Harrison's components — 'each with its Latin label on'!"

"'Not at all! but in general, how would you characterize him, if asked what sort of a man he was!"

"I should perhaps decline."

Miss Essie had no chance to push her question, for Sam came with a demand for Mr. Linden himself, which was at once obeyed.

A little while passed, and then Mr. Linden came back again; and walked composedly round to the back of Faith's chair. "Mrs. Stoutenburgh," he said, "will you let me take this lady away for five minutes? — Miss Faith, will you come?"

Nothing loth, if the truth must be told, Faith rose up to follow his leading; which was out of the parlour and through the hall.

"Miss Faith," he said as he shut the door, "have you been conjugating the verb s'ennuyer?"

"No," she said. "I was amused to hear you and Miss Essie talk."

"What singular ideas people have on the question of plea-

sant things!" said Mr. Linden. "Come in here, Miss Faith" — and he opened the door of a mingled library, study room, and office — "I want to give you (before we go any further) the whole quotation which I did *not* dare to give Miss Essie, though it would not have been meant for her, if I had." And he took down one of the books, and read —

"'Her eye, — it seems a chemic test,
And drops upon you like an acid;
It bites you with unconscious zest,
So clear and bright, so coldly placid;
It holds you quietly aloof,
It holds, — and yet it does not win you;
It merely puts you to the proof
And sorts what qualities are in you,' &c.

'There you are classified: she's gone
Far, far away into herself;
Each with its Latin label on,
Your poor components, one by one,
Are laid upon their proper shelf
In her compact and ordered mind,' &c.

'O brain exact, that in thy scales
Canst weigh the sun and never err,
For once thy patient science fails,
One problem still defies thy art; —
Thou never canst compute for her
The distance and diameter
Of any simple human heart.'

That's comforting doctrine — isn't it?" he said smiling as he put up the book.

"How good that is!" said Faith, as much in the spirit of enjoyment as of criticism. "But it isn't just Miss Essie. It's more like" — She stopped.

"Well — who? No, it is not Miss Essie."

"I was going to say, Mrs. Somers — but it is not Mrs. Somers, either. She is more kind than that."

"Yes, I think so — though she keeps her kindness under lock and key, like her sweetmeats. Miss Faith, shall I give you a loophole view of those boys — before you venture yourself among them?"

She said yes, with a bright face that shewed her primed for

any enjoyment, or anything else perhaps, he might propose. He knew the house, apparently, and led her out of one door and in at another, giving her little undertone remarks by the way.

"I know you and I agree in some of our notions about pleasant things," he said, "or I should not presume that you would find this one. To some people, you know, boys are mere receivers for Latin and Greek — to me they are separate little pieces of humanity. I study them quite as much as they do their lessons. Now you shall see them off their guard. This room is dark — but I know the way."

He took her hand as he spoke, and led her through the darkness to a spot of shaded light at the further end of the room, whence too came laughter and voices; then drew back the curtain from a sash door and let her look in.

It was pleasant, as he said, — the room was glowing with light, the boys in a knot about the fire; some sitting, some standing, one or two couchant upon the rug. Sam was the spokesman just then — the rest listening, interrupting, applauding; the flashing firelight shewing such different faces! such varied indications! — they looked like a little Congress of representatives.

"What are they doing, Mr. Linden? Sam is having a good time! — and all the rest of them for that matter."

"I am not quite sure what they are doing, Miss Faith, — Sam *looks* as if he might be recounting some of his own exploits — for the twentieth time."

"But Reuben, who never would recount one of his, is five times as much of a man."

"Yes, — I wonder what Miss Essie would say of the two, respectively. She means to study me to-night, you know," he said smiling — "and I mean she shall! There comes Mrs. Stoutenburgh — now I shall take you in."

Not by the sash door, but round again by another way they came upon the little company. Mrs. Stoutenburgh had been in before, and her reappearance had not made much change in the order of things; but when Faith came in every boy rose

to his feet, and the admiring looks were only bounded by the number of eyes. They fell back right and left as she came on towards the fire; and once seated there in an easy chair, those who knew her came up to pay their respects — those who did not stood still and paid them at a distance, whispering and touching each other with,

"My! ain't she handsome!" —

All of which amused at least two of the lookers-on. One or two of the boys Mr. Linden brought up and presented. Faith however was presently out of her chair of state and wound in and out among them, speaking to those whom she knew or remembered at Neanticut. She was in a little gale of good-fellowship by the time Mr. Linden with Miss Essie returned to the room.

"Well!" said Miss Essie. "Now what's the first order of things? Mr. Linden, these are all your boys, I suppose?"

"These are all and not all, Miss Essie."

"Yes. Do they always do what you tell them?"

"They are extraordinary boys!" said Mr. Linden. "Not one of them has a will of his own."

"Oh!" said Miss Essie. "What has become of their wills? Have you stolen them? Now I am going to put that to the proof. Sam Stoutenburgh — you are not twenty years old yet, your mother says; have you a will of your own?"

"Mother says I have," replied Sam.

"Ah! — you see!" said Miss Essie. "*You* sir, — I know you but I don't remember you, — your teacher says you haven't a will of your own -- now is it true? I want to know."

"A will of my own, ma'am?" Reuben repeated, looking doubtfully from Miss Essie to Mr. Linden. "Against whose, if you please?"

"Well —" said Miss Essie, a little surprised, and laughing — "upon honour, will you tell the truth?"

"I'll try, ma'am."

"Against Mr. Linden's. Now upon honour! — I'll go bail for you."

The bail was not needed. Reuben's quiet "No, ma'am, and don't want to have," was very forcible.

"I declare!" said Miss Essie turning to Mr. Linden, — "you're a wonderful man! — For of course Sam's word is *his mother's* word, and that's nothing in the circumstances. I wish I had been so happy as to be a boy and go to school to you, Mr. Linden! All my life my trouble has been a will of my own; and I never found anybody that could deprive me of it."

"Nor yourself ready to give it up?"

"Of course! but I never could, you know. It was stronger than I."

"I'll tell you what," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, coming up, "if you two people want to talk any nore, you've got to stand out of the way, — Faith and I are going to have a game with these boys."

"What sort of game?"

"Why blind man's buff," said Mrs. Stoutenburgh. "Sam — go to my room and fetch that plaid ribband that lies on the bed."

"Now I'll tell you," said Miss Essie, "you must play this game as they do it up at Suckiaug. Any game wants a stake, you know, Mr. Stoutenburgh, to make it thoroughly interesting. You must play it this way. Everybody that is caught and *found*, must answer any question the person catching chooses to ask. And if he refuses to answer, he must answer some other question and give a reason for it. That'll make 'em fly round!"

In the midst of a little general bustle that ensued, Faith was startled at finding that her rose and myrtle were gone. The next instant a hand presented them unceremoniously under her face, and an abrupt voice announced, "Here's your flowers!" It was even Phil Davids who had done it. Faith seized her flowers, and then sprang after Phil and thanked him very gratefully; rightly hailing this civility as an omen for good. The flowers were next bestowed carefully in a glass of water, to be in safety till the play should be over.

Now began the fun of robing and disrobing. The ladies pinned up their silk skirts into order and quiet compass, and pulled on over their arms and shoulders whatever boys' gear would fit. Faith was jaunty in a little cloth jacket which covered her arms; Miss Essie wrapped about her a plaid travelling shawl of the Squire's. Mrs. Stoutenburgh deferred her disguising till she should need it, being in the first place to be the catcher, not the caught. Mr. Linden on his part chose to rely on his own resources for safety, but two or three of the boys tied on shawls and scarfs — soon discarded in the mêlée.

If Sam's intent was to have a steady game of running, never to produce results — unless fatigue and laughter — he had well chosen the first 'catcher.' Mrs. Stoutenburgh's powers of entanglement lay not in that line, though she ran about with the most utter good will and merriment. But how the boys jumped over her arms! — or dived under them! How Sam caught her round the waist, and even kissed her, regardless of danger! She might have been playing till this time, if Mr. Linden had not interposed and gallantly suffered himself to be caught.

"We'll have to step round now, I tell *you!*" said one of the boys, — "this'll be another guess sort of a run!"

"Look out for yourself now, Miss Faith!" said Reuben — both which things were profoundly true and necessary. And Faith soon found out that she was the quarry — and that pigeons were of no avail. Whether Mr. Linden had heard her steps about his sick room till he had learned them by heart, — whether the theory of 'spirits touching' held good in this case, — he gave her a swift little run round the room, and shut her up gracefully in the corner. Then with the simplicity which characterized most of his proceedings, disregarding jacket and cap, he took hold of her hand and inquired,

"Miss Faith — do you consider yourself disguised?"

The soft laugh which it was impossible to keep back,

answered to his ear, as the flush which overspread Faith's face answered to eyes of the rest of the company.

"That will do to begin with," he said as he took off the plaid ribband, while Mrs. Stoutenburgh laughed and clapped her hands after her own lively fashion.

"But Miss Faith!" said Sam — "don't tie up your head, please! — if you shut your eyes it will do just as well."

"You can't see her eyes if they're shut, you foolish boy," said Mr. Linden, — "go off and attend to your own affairs. Miss Faith, shall I tie this on — or do you wish for a deputy?"

There is a great deal of character that comes out in a play! Miss Essie might have had excellent opportunity for prosecuting her "studies," if she had not been busy on her own score. For Faith did not play like Mrs. Stoutenburgh. She played like herself — with a gentleness that never overstepped delicate bounds; but her foot was light and true, and her movements fearless and free as those of the very boys. It was a pretty game that she played. It would have been a short one, but that it was so hard to identify her captives. One boy after another Faith caught, — to the feeling they were all alike! At last her hand seized another prize, and her voice exclaimed, Mr. Stoutenburgh!

There was a sharp change about now between the older and the younger people. Faith did her best not to be caught again. But after half a dozen changes between Mr. Linden and the boys, he again had the pleasure of investing her with the plaid ribband.

"May I give her the question?" whispered Miss Essie at Mr. Linden's ear.

"No indeed!" said Mr. Linden. — "Miss Faith, what is the difference between a bird and a philosopher?"

Somewhat to the surprise as well as amusement of the company, the answer to this was the heartiest, merriest bit of a laugh; then she said,

"One looks round the corner, Mr. Linden!"

"Well you won't see round the corner now," he said softly

and laughing as he tied on the ribband. "Miss Faith! do you mean to say I did?"

She said "no," and ran away. But Faith was not in luck this time, for she caught Miss Essie. And Miss Essie in a few minutes got the chance she wanted at Faith. She wouldn't have had it, for Faith ran too well and vanished too skilfully; but a little knot of the boys getting into a knot just in her way and at the wrong time, Faith fell a prey.

"Now," said her captor unbinding her ribband, "what do you think I am going to ask you?"

Faith was very doubtful on the subject, and waited in silence.

"Only a matter of taste," said Miss Essie. "Who do you think" — (speaking slowly) — "is the handsomest man in Pattaquasset?"

The colour mounted in Faith's cheeks too distinctly to leave any room for the doubt that no other answer was at hand. She avoided Miss Essie's black eyes.

"Come!" said that lady.

"I can't tell you," — said Faith, amid the laughter of some of the company, which was enormous.

"You can't!" said Miss Essie. "Now you are at my mercy. You have got to tell me something else and give your reason. What do you think is the best profession a man can follow?"

"Any one is good that is used right," said Faith, looking down and speaking with difficulty, — "but I suppose the *best* is a minister's."

"Why?" said Miss Essie, disappointed.

"Because the business of that profession is to lead men to heaven; — that of others is only to fit them for earth."

"My dear, you're a fine girl!" said the Squire — willing Faith should say anything that cut out Dr. Harrison. "Miss Essie, what do you mean by asking her such a string of questions? — how can she tell who's the handsomest man? She wouldn't like to hurt Mr. Linden's feelings by saying me, nor

to make us both mad by saying anybody else — if there *was* anybody else to speak of."

"You hush, Mr. Stoutenburgh!" said Miss Essie. "Don't *you* know how to ask questions? Now Faith Derrick — run off with yourself." Faith obeyed with a trifle less than her usual spirit; but the game presently called it back again. Darting about, like some gentle-hearted hawk, among those flying pigeons, she had seized one boy and another with her usual bad success in the matter of identifying, when the boys suddenly cleared away a little — anxious perhaps that Mr. Linden should be caught again; for of all the players he gave *them* the most fun. And so effectually did they clear the way — so ineffectually did he protect himself! that the next grasp of Faith's hand was upon his arm. And her voice gravely announced that she knew it.

"Now Faith!" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh, "do puzzle him if you can — give him a hard question."

"She does not want to ask me any questions," said Mr. Linden as he untied the ribband. "You forget, Mrs. Stoutenburgh, how many she can ask every day. Now with Miss Essie the case is quite different."

Very quiet and pleasant was the look bent on Faith, — very cool and undisturbed the manner. "Miss Faith, are you tired? — I must be philosophical enough to inform you that there is a shadow of puss-in-the-corner!"

And a very plain expression of gratitude was in her eyes and smile as she answered, "No, I'm not tired, Mr. Linden — but I would as lieve look on as play."

That seemed to be the general grown-up mind; but before the looking on had lasted long, everybody was called into another room to supper. There the boys were left somewhat to themselves at one end of the table, and the half dozen others stood or sat in the warm fireplace corner at the other. Mr. Linden indeed, and Squire Stoutenburgh, were both "boys" very often; but their returns to the ladies were frequent and prolonged. Faith was enthroned in a great chair, and there petted by Mrs. Stoutenburgh, while everybody brought

her things by turns — a privilege highly prized by some of the boys. Neither could Miss Essie complain of want of attention, while Mrs. Stoutenburgh and Mr. Linden took laughing care of each other between whiles.

"Miss Essie," he said as he brought her a cup of coffee, "where are you in the pursuit of knowledge?"

Miss Essie laughed; yet not a triumphant laugh, nor even a satisfied one; it might be considered doubtful.

"I think," she said, "you are one of a sort I don't much understand, Mr. Linden — perhaps because I don't know them much. Aren't you one of what I may call the *good* sort?"

Faith's laugh, which was indeed very low but unavoidable, was the first testimony.

"I hope you may —" said Mr. Linden, — "the words sound pleasant. I am not quite sure what they mean."

"Ah! There you are again!" said Miss Essie. "As difficult to catch at other things as at blind man's buff. Well I'll be frank with you, for I don't mean to offend you. I mean, the sort of people who are called 'rigidly righteous' — people who think it incumbent on them to be better than their neighbours."

"O no —" said Mr. Linden, — "I quite disclaim that. I only think it incumbent on me to be better than myself."

"Yes, but you are one of the people I mean — aren't you?"

"Not according to that term, Miss Essie. May I ask what you mean by the other?"

"Rigidly righteous?"

"Yes."

"Why I told you — people that pretend to be better than people in general. People in general, you know, get on without pretending much to be good at all: and of course it's disagreeable to be brought short up at every turn with 'you ought not,' and 'you ought;' and whether it is said or acted don't make much difference. Now here's this child, a

little while ago, thought she mustn't say anything was good but a minister."

"Do you mean Christians?" said Mr. Linden.

"Well —" said Miss Essie, "I hope we're all *Christians* — aren't we? We're not heathens."

"I mean the followers of Christ. Is that what you meant? I do wear the badge of that 'Legion of Honour.'"

Miss Essie looked fidgeted. Faith was letting her ice-cream melt while she listened. Mrs. Stoutenburgh in the midst of supper-table attentions gave an anxious eye and ear to the conference, which she would not interrupt.

"Well now tell me what *you* mean by that?" said Miss Essie, feeling herself in some confusion, of terms at least.

"Can I find plainer words? You know what was meant by a follower in the old feudal times?"

"No I don't," said Miss Essie beginning to sip her coffee again. "Tell me!"

"A follower was one who binding himself to the service his lord required of him, thenceforth paid it — in peace or in war, — to the end of his life. And the terms of agreement were two-fold, — fidelity on the one side, protection on the other. 'They follow me,' says Christ, 'and I give unto them eternal life'."

"Yes, but," said Miss Essie, "do you think it is required that we should put ourselves so much out of the way to be good? I think people were meant to enjoy themselves."

"*I* enjoy myself —" said Mr. Linden smiling a little. "What think you makes the lark fly circling up into the very sunbeams, singing as he goes? — is it duty? is it to rise above the robins and sparrows?"

"I don't understand you!" said Miss Essie respectfully.

"That is just the inner life of many a Christian, — his very heart-cry is,

'Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross,
That raiseth me!' —"

"Well, you think nobody can be safe that don't live just so?" persisted Miss Essie.

"In whom such a life is not at least begun? — How can it be, Miss Essie? Safe? without the blessing of God?"

"Well there we differ," said the lady. "That's what I mean by being rigidly righteous. I think every one must judge for himself."

A little more erect Mr. Linden stood, drawing himself up slightly — it was his wont sometimes under a touch of excitement, and spoke with his deep emphasis these words —

"'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' — Miss Essie, where is your permit for free judgment against the Bible?"

"I didn't mean *that*," said Miss Essie, lowering her crest. "But I mean that everybody can't be good after your strict way."

"I am not standing up for myself, you know," said he pleasantly, "nor denying that you have described me right; but what a follower of Christ *ought* to be, is no more rigid than sunlight — or than the wings of angels. Yet both sun and angels 'always do his commandment' who made them both."

"Oh people can't be sunlight — nor angels neither, in this world. You're Utopian! That's what I said."

"They can be 'burning and shining lights,'" said Mr. Linden. "Miss Essie, will you gainsay the Bible? Why can they not?"

"They *can* be — but I suppose they aren't obliged to be; or what is to become of us all?" said Miss Essie, half seriously half defiantly.

"That will depend upon whom we follow," he answered gravely.

"Well now, Mr. Linden, how many people in the world are 'followers' in the way you have described them? — and are all the rest going to destruction? Take the people in this room now, for instance, — boys and all here's twenty of us perhaps. How many do you suppose are here of your way of

'following'? You're one — who's another? Stand off there, and see whom you can get to join you!"

"Stand off and say with Moses — 'who is on the Lord's side?' — there would be several, Miss Essie."

"Well count up," said Miss Essie. "I suppose they have no objection to shew themselves. You are one — who's another?"

"I am another," said Faith, rising and setting down her ice cream.

"You!" — said Miss Essie turning the black eyes upon her, — "you look like it, child!"

"You must put the 'rigid' out of your head," Mr. Linden said, with a smile which changed as he spoke.

"Well who else?" said Miss Essie, for some reason or other in impatient temper. "Tell them your definition, will you, and ask who'll stand by you. Mrs. Stoutenburgh! — make them all stop and attend."

"If I ask them you may think they come to please me."

"No, no, you know how to say it. Mr. Stoutenburgh! — boys! — listen. I want to know how many there are here of a particular kind of people — Mr. Linden will tell you what kind."

He spoke then — as Faith had once or twice heard him speak, sending his voice through the room almost without raising it.

"Miss Essie de Staff wishes to know how many there are here of a particular kind of people — those that 'have sworn unto the Lord, and will not go back.' Whoever is of that number will please come over to this side."

There was a little astonished pause. Mr. and Mrs. Stoutenburgh, just then at the further end of the room, had moved at Miss Essie's summons, but stopped short at the first sound of Mr. Linden's voice, and looked in a sort of maze, — *he* clearly was not jesting, that was all they could make out. That too the boys saw: but for a minute they stood like statues, — then Reuben stepped from the group and walked quietly, deliberately, over to where Mr. Linden stood; the covenant-signing

in his face glowing with the Free Church addition — "until death!"

One and another followed him — one after another, — Faith was surprised to see how many: ranging themselves about Mr. Linden. But something in it all touched him — stirred him, — something perhaps personal to himself and them; for after the first three or four had come he looked no more, — his eyes fell, and the firmly compressed lips could not quite conceal their trembling. He stood as statue-like as the boys had done.

In the interest of a moment and a scene that she never forgot, it was a simple thing that Faith lost thought of her own standing. Perhaps Miss Essie shared her oblivion of self for that minute; her look of uneasy curiosity changed to a sobriety that was almost awe. Perhaps self-recollection came back; for after eying the dumb show with uncommonly blank black eyes, both they and she suddenly started into action.

"That will do," she said with voice and gesture, — "you may go back — scatter! and be boys again. Mr. Linden, what I complain of is, that you say *you* are on the Lord's side and that everybody else is not!"

His thoughts came back slowly, as from some far-distant region, — he even turned to Faith and wheeled up a chair for her before he answered.

"No, Miss Essie — those last words I believe I never said. But the 'Lord knoweth them that are his' — let each one have answering knowledge for himself."

Miss Essie's look was not comfortable. She abandoned the point in hand, and swallowed her cold coffee.

"What *are* you talking about?" said Mrs. Stoutenburgh coming up to them. "What sort of a game was that, Miss Essie?"

"Nothing," — said Miss Essie. "I said I would study Mr. Linden — and I have. I've found out two things about him."

"I wonder if he's been studying too!" said Mrs. Stouten-

burgh. — "What are the two things? Miss Essie, your coffee's just as cold as Faith's ice is warm! — that comes of talking when you ought to be eating. Mr. Linden — just help Mr. Stoutenburgh with that little table, please — and I'll have the coffee-pot here and be comfortable."

"And I shall tell Miss Essie a story about fishes," said Mr. Linden as he obeyed.

Mrs. Stoutenburgh sat down behind her coffee-pot, while the gentlemen went back and forth between the two tables, bringing cups and cake and what else was needed for this "German cotillion," as Mr. Linden called it. During which interlude Miss Essie, after taking an observant view of Faith, gave her a significant private admonition, that "somebody" would not like her being there. Faith in vain endeavoured to get some light on this dark information; Miss Essie was startling but enigmatical, and suddenly turned from her and asked Mr. Linden "what was the story he had promised?"

"Not much of a *story*, though I called it one. It has to do with the way different races of fishes *wear their bones*."

"Well?" said Miss Essie, using her eyes; while Faith forgot her flushed cheeks and used hers.

"You are perhaps aware," he said smiling, "that even fishes have their inflexible points; in other words, a region of bone *somewhere*."

Miss Essie bowed her head, mentally ejaculating, "You have!"

"And all the fossil tribes, as well as those which now exist, are divided into two great classes, — those which wear their bones on the outside, and those which wear them within. The first have a perfect plate armour — jointed and fitted and carved, piece by piece; but the inner framework is merely cartilaginous. The others, while they *shew* nothing but pliant flesh, have an internal structure of bone which can outlast ages."

"Curious!" said Miss Essie, eying him all the while carefully. "Then I suppose we are all fishes!"

"I was thinking — apropos to our talk awhile ago — of the

intangible, unseen nature of a Christian's strength. The moment his defence is worn on the outside, that moment there is a failure of strength within. His real armour of proof is nothing more 'rigid,' Miss Essie, than 'the girdle of truth,' 'the breastplate of righteousness,' and 'for a helmet the hope of salvation.'"

"Very good armour," said Miss Essie; "but can't he wear it without being unlike other people?"

"*Can* he?"

"Look here," said Squire Stoutenburgh, "what have you been about? If you've been studying anatomy, Mr. Linden, I'll go learn dancing!"

And the conversation diverged.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Faith pondered probably Miss Essie's enigmatical words; but she said nothing on the subject even to her mother. Other people's words and looks had produced their share of disturbance at the time; disturbance that Faith did not like to recollect. And she would not recollect it, practically. It left no trace on her face or behaviour. The simplicity of both, unchanged in a whit, testified for her that her modesty would not take such hints from other people's testimony, and that there was no folly in her to be set fluttering at the suggestion.

The next Wednesday morning was one of great promise, — fair and soft and quiet, with November's sunshine softening November's brown dress.

"I think, Miss Faith," Mr. Linden said before he went off after breakfast, "that you should take a short run or two, before you try that long one to Mattabeeset."

"A run, Mr. Linden? Didn't I have one last night?"

"Truly yes, — but I mean on horseback. Will you take such a one to-day?"

"Yes!" said Faith, looking different things, especially

pleasure, — "but Mr. Linden, I don't know where I am to get a horse. Crab can't go now."

"Well, as I am to play the part of page, and run by your side," said Mr. Linden, "I am rather glad he can't! — no disrespect to his other good qualities. When will you be ready, Miss Faith?"

The hour fixed upon had need to be early, for the days were short; so though books had a little time after dinner, it was but a little. Then the horses came; and Mr. Linden took Faith in charge, with words from her mother that might have been very useful if they had been needed, — which in his case they hardly were. A fact which his reply, or the manner of it, seemed to impress upon Mrs. Derrick's mind, for she saw them ride off with nothing but pleasure.

Other people saw them with a variety of emotions. All the boys they met (except Sam) looked unqualified delight, — from her window Mrs. Stoutenburgh gave them a gay wave of her hand; Miss Bezac on the sidewalk absolutely turned to look again. They rode leisurely up the grassy road, hardly beyond a walk at first, and it was not till the houses grew few and the road more open, that Faith had her promised run: which was but an easy trot, after all.

"You must begin very gently, Miss Faith," said her companion as they walked their horses up a little hill. "Look how those topsails mark the water line!"

"Yes — don't you like to see the white sails peeping over the trees? I always do. But Mr. Linden, I don't get tired easily — you needn't be afraid. I can go just as fast as you like." She looked enough in the mood.

"You know I am interested in the matter, — if I should come home to-morrow and find you gone to sleep at midday — I should lose my French lesson! Now you may have another run."

This run was rather a long one, yet came to an unexpected end, for turning a woody point in the road the two riders saw a wagon before them, so directly in their way, that the run changed to a walk even before they perceived that the wagon

was in distress. Some bit of harness, some pin, had given way, and the driver had dismounted to repair damages. But moody, or intent upon his work, Faith's horse was close upon him before he looked up — then she saw it was Squire Deacon. He looked down again as suddenly, with only a slight motion of his hand to his hat.

Faith's first impulse would have been to rush on; but she checked that. Her next would have been to wait and leave somebody else to speak first; but she overcame that too. So it was her very clear gentle voice that asked,

"Are you in trouble here, Mr. Deacon?"

The Squire had no time to give his answer, and scarce a moment wherein to concoct it, for Mr. Linden had dismounted and now came between Faith's horse and the wagon, with, — "What is the matter, Squire Deacon? — can I help you?"

The Squire looked up then, full, with a face that darkened as he looked.

"It's you, is it?" he said slowly. "I thought it was Dr. Harrison!"

"Can I help you?" Mr. Linden repeated — and the tone was a little peremptory.

Sullenly and slowly the Squire told the damage — the broken harness, the lost lynch-pin; and let Mr. Linden take the first out of his hands, and do what he chose with it; looking on the while — then by degrees taking hold himself and working with him as with any other man, but throwing off jealously the kindness of his helper's words or manner. It was a grave kindness, certainly, but it did not belie the name. Faith sat looking on. After awhile her voice broke the silence.

"Did you say a lynch-pin was wanting, Mr. Deacon?"

"There's one gone."

"I should like to be doing something to help. Will you lend me your knife, Mr. Deacon? — and I'll try." But that brought a hand on her bridle.

"I cannot trust your horse out of my sight, Miss Faith, — I will get what is wanting."

"There's no use in anyone's doing anything," said Squire Deacon, by way of a settler; and the harness work went on in silence.

Faith waited a little.

"I am not the least afraid," she said then, leaning over her horse's neck but speaking no name. "There's a place only a little way back where I think I can get a lynch-pin, — if *anybody* will lend me a knife. Please let me go and be doing something! I want to go."

"This cord," said Mr. Linden, taking one up from the bottom of the wagon — "is it wanted for any special purpose, Squire Deacon?"

"I guess if you ask Joe *he* could tell you," said the Squire with a glance that way. "'*Twas* good for something, but he's tied it in forty knots — just to see if I'd be fool enough to pick 'em out."

"It would be very useful about this harness," said Mr. Linden, — "will you try and get rid of the knots?" — and he handed Faith the cord, with a smile which said she must make that do instead of the lynch-pin.

Which Faith did not particularly like, for she had a strong hankering for the ride back to the bushes. She dropped the bridle upon her horse's neck, and began to exercise her patience and skill upon the knots.

"I wish I had a knife!" she said as she did so, "and I'd shew you that I am not afraid." And a little colour rose in her face, which rather grew.

"*That's* easy," said Squire Deacon, looking suddenly up and extending his hand. "Here's one as'll cut through most things." Mr. Linden's head was bent over the harness, — neither eye nor hand stirred from his work.

"Thank you, Mr. Deacon," said Faith, feeling the blood rise to her brow, — "but I won't go for it now. — I'll do this first." In her confusion Faith did not see another person that joined the group, till he was standing at her horse's side.

"What sort of a bee are you gettin' up here on the high-

way?" said Mr. Simlins in his good-humoured growl (and he had a variety.) "What *air* you doin' on horse-back?"

"There's harness to be mended here, Mr. Simlins — and I'm making rope for it."

"You go 'long!" said he. "Who are you makin' rope for? Give that to me?" But Faith held fast.

"No, Mr. Simlins, you can't have it — I am bound to get out these knots. There is work doing round here, that perhaps you can help."

Mr. Simlins stooped under her horse's head and went round to the other side, and then for the first time he got a full view.

"That's the way you perform actions!" he said; seeming too profoundly struck to be at all wordy. "'Say and Seal' I guess you be! What's the matter with you, Squire?"

"If anything is, I haint heard of it," said Mr. Deacon, with the knife lying heavy against his ribs. "Mr. Linden's turned harness-maker — that's the last news."

"O are you there, Mr. Simlins?" said the new mechanic, looking up from his work.

"Can't be more unlikely than you," said the farmer, beginning on his part to finger the broken harness. "How *you* come to be here passes all my imagery. That'll do smartly. Where did you learn all trades? I don't see, Squire Deacon, but he's as good at mendin' as you be at marrin'. What do *you* think?"

"I don't see as one man has much to do with another," said Mr. Deacon lucidly.

"Yes, that will do," said Mr. Linden. "Now Miss Faith — give me that cord if you please, and you shall go after the lynch-pin."

"No," she said pleasantly, — "it'll be done in a minute — I want to finish it."

"When did you get back from York, Squire?" said Mr. Simlins — "and what took you away? I haint heerd yet. I never believed you were gone *for good* — though folks said it."

"'Taint generally worth while to believe what folks says," replied the Squire. "I've been back three weeks, I guess. Shouldn't wonder if I went again though."

"Shouldn't wonder if you did," said Mr. Simlins. "I would if I was you — if I wanted to. Mr. Linden, it was a providential thing, that you should come along at this idiomatical moment. There aint another man in Pattaquasset would ha' done this so good as you."

"There is another line of business open to me then," said Mr. Linden, who had begun upon the other end of the piece of cord with opposition fingers.

"What *aint* open to you?" said Mr. Simlins. "Do you know of anything? Give us that cord — will you?"

"Yes, you may have it now — the knots are all out," said Mr. Linden, as he put the disentangled cord in the hands of Mr. Simlins and himself in the saddle. "Now Miss Faith, you shall have a lesson in lynch-pins — s'il vous plait."

"You do beat all!" said Squire Deacon looking up from under his hat, and with a voice that kept his eyes company.

Faith looked very pretty as she turned her horse in obedience to the intimation given her, with a somewhat demure smile and blush upon her face. Mr. Simlins looked, as well as the Squire, with a different expression.

"Well, I guess you're about right!" was his answering remark. "I do believe he can get the whip hand of most things. He's a Say and Seal man, he says." To which, however, the Squire deigned no response. Stooping over his harness, fingering and fitting, he was silent a little; then spoke in a careless, half inquiring half assenting sort of way.

"What wonders me is, why he don't marry that girl out of hand. I reckon she'd follow him down that road as easy as she does down others. What's he waiting for?"

"I guess he haint pitched upon a likely place to settle yet," — said Mr. Simlins, in a manner equally careless and devoid of reliable information. Squire Deacon gave a little inarticulate reply.

"He'd better hurry up —" he said, — "Dr. Harrison's giving chase."

"Is he?" said Mr. Simlins. "He'll be where the dog was when he chased the wolf — if he's spry. I shouldn't wonder."

"O — you think he's a wolf, do you?" said Mr. Deacon. "Well — the doctor's chance aint much the worse of that."

"Don't look very carnivorous," said Mr. Simlins, "but I aint sure. I wouldn't be so quick in my presumptions, Squire. You'll shoot the wrong game one of these days — if you haint already."

"Think so?" said the Squire. "Well, I aint after the game they are, any way, so it don't matter to me which of 'em gets her. Most folks say it's like to be the doctor, — *she* seems tryin' 'em both by turns."

The riders, on their part, had a short run back on the road they had come, to where there was a hedge and thicket and trees together; and Faith's horse being led close up to the side of the hedge, and she herself provided with a knife, she was free to cut as many lynch-pins as she chose. But at this point Faith handed back the knife. "I can't do it half so well," she said. "I would rather you did it, Mr. Linden."

"You would rather not do it?" he said looking at her. "Is *no* bread pleasant but that 'eaten in secret'?"

Faith coloured very much. "I didn't care about *doing* it, Mr. Linden, except to be useful, and for the enterprise of going off for it by myself. And I didn't care about *that*, more than two minutes."

"You know I had a charge about you before we came out," he said, taking the knife and bending down towards the hedge to use it. "But for that — or a like one in my own mind — you should have had your enterprise. There — I think that may serve the purpose."

The lynch-pin being delivered, the riders left the distressed wagon behind; and again the free road stretched before them; the soft air and light filled all the way and even the

brown tree stems with pleasantness. The horses felt they had had a rest and pricked up their ears to be in motion again, and the minds of the riders perhaps felt a stir of the like kind.

"Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "a German writer says, that 'one should every day read a fine poem, look upon an excellent picture, hear a little good music, and, if possible, speak a few sensible words.'"

"Why do you tell that to me, Mr. Linden?"

"I consider it my duty to keep you well informed as to yours."

"But then!" said Faith, who by dint of trotting had got into as merry a mood as her gentleness often wore, "I hope you will also think it your duty, Mr. Linden, to tell me how I can *perform* mine. Will you?"

"Of course! — please speak a few sensible words to me at once."

"You begin with the easiest thing!" said Faith.

"Yes, I am generally considerate. But as it is part of my duty to hear a little good music, I am willing you should sing first."

Music he had, though not exactly of the specified sort; for Faith's laugh rolled along the road, like the chafing of silver pebbles in a brook.

"Now for the next part," said Mr. Linden smiling.

"I think I have done too much already," said Faith growing grave. "Besides," she added, the corners of her mouth all alive again, "I don't remember what the next part is, Mr. Linden."

"Why the sensible words! — what are the most sensible you can think of on a sudden, Miss Faith?"

"I don't know that I could think of anything very sensible on a sudden, Mr. Linden. Is it my duty to do it on a sudden?"

"It might be, Miss Faith. Indeed I think it is now!"

"What would you like them to be about, Mr. Linden? and I'll try."

"Nay, you may choose: sense is of universal application."

"If I should say what was uppermost," said Faith, "it would be, How very pleasant what we are doing now, is!"

"Which part?"

"Both parts! — Every part! One makes the other more pleasant." And Faith's happy face looked so.

"Very sensible words!" said Mr. Linden smiling. "I agree to them perfectly, — which is, you know, in every mind, the great test of sense. The picture, Miss Faith, we have before us."

"Yes, — isn't it lovely to-day, Mr. Linden? and hasn't it been lovely ever since we set out? Except that broken harness — and I don't think that has hurt anything, either."

"No, I am not sure that even the harness was much the worse. And 'it' has been very lovely. As for the poem, Miss Faith, you cannot be trusted with that — and must resign yourself to hearing it read. What shall it be?"

"I don't know," said Faith. "I know hardly any poetry, Mr. Linden, except what I have heard you read. Will you read some, perhaps, this evening?"

"Yes — every evening, if you like, — if we are to follow Göthe's rule. Just before tea is a good time, don't you think so?"

"Yes indeed!" said Faith, whose colour rose from pure pleasure, as her thought went back to L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. "I don't think there is any time pleasanter for it. But they're all pleasant — I've dropped my whip, Mr. Linden!" —

"I will get it for you," he said checking his horse, "if you will promise not to run away! I am afraid of your 'enterprising' spirit, Miss Faith."

But her look at him was a little touched and deprecating. They turned their horses together and went back a few steps. There was no trouble in finding the whip, for just where it had been dropped, a boy stood holding it on high for Faith's acceptance. The boy was Phil Davids.

"Thank you, Phil!" said Faith, surprised and grateful.

"I see it go out of your hand," said Phil.

"Yes," said Mr. Linden — whose smile and word of thanks had accompanied Faith's, — "Phil has singularly quick eyes. They have done me good service before."

As they turned again, Farmer Davids stood at their horses' heads. They were just at the farmer's door, and he so entreated them to come in 'and rest,' that there was no refusing his hospitality. It was large, and various — Pumpkin pies and cider, and much pouring forth of gratitude and admiration for Mr. Linden's success with Phil.

"What have you done to that fellow?" his father remarked admiringly to Mr. Linden. "You never see such an alteration in a boy. He used — oncet — to talk hard words agin you, sir; — you won't mind hearing it now; but he's come all about, and lately there's nothing to Phil's mind can equal up to Mr. Linden. He don't *say* much about it, sir, but it's evident. And he's been at me and his mother this fortnight or two, to give him something to make a present to you — the boys do, he says; and he wants the best thing on the farm should go, and so do I, sir, if we knowed oncet what would be most favourable. It would be a kindness, sir, as I should be grateful for, — if you'd say what would do you most service or be most pleasure — of anything that is on the farm; — fruit or vegetables or dairy. We're plain folks, sir; I say what I mean. Take some pie, Mr. Linden! — some cider, sir?"

Answering these various questions and demands as best he might, Mr. Linden contrived to convince Mr. Davids that Phil himself was the thing "on the farm" that he cared most about; and his goodwill, better than any special manifestation thereof; giving at the same time full and grateful thanks for the other things that had come to him when he was ill.

"Yes," said Mr. Davids, smiling one of his grim and rare smiles, — "all that don't help *our* difficulty, you see. Well, Phil and I'll have to put our heads together. But there's one person can send nothing that will tell half his good feelings of gratefulness to you, — and that's me." And a very unwonted softening of the stern man's eye and brow shewed that he spoke a gentle truth.

Kind words answered him, — words of personal kindness and interest, and deep pleasure too; but Mr. Davids knew it was a pleasure, an interest, a kindness, that had each (like Samuel Rutherford's hope) "a face looking straight out unto that day!"

Truly, "a city that is set on an hill, cannot be hid!"

And the farmer felt it, and his manner softened, and his interest grew more wistful and intent with every minute they stayed.

Faith was on horseback and Mr. Linden about to follow, when Farmer Davids arrested him with a low remark and question.

"She's a fine-faced girl — looks as her father needn't ha' been ashamed of her. Looks *good* — like he did. Is she going to marry the son of Judge Harrison, sir?"

"Dr. Harrison has told me nothing of the kind."

"I heerd it" — said the farmer. "I didn't know nothing, how it might be. Good day, sir! I hope you'll come again." And they trotted off at last, with again the renewed feeling of liberty and pleasure of motion. But the sun had descended perceptibly nearer to the horizon than he was when they dismounted. However there was nothing to do but to ride, for the proposed route was a circuit and they were passed the first half of the way already.

"That was good, Mr. Linden," said Faith.

"Which part of it this time?"

"I don't mean the pumpkin pie and the cider," she said smiling.

"Do you feel rested?"

"Oh yes! Rested and tired too. At least, quite ready to move on again."

"Yes, so am I. But do you know Göthe left out one very important item in his daily directions?"

"What was that?"

"One should, if possible, every day give some one else a little pleasure."

"Yes!" said Faith. "And it's so true, and so easy. How much you gave there just now, Mr. Linden!"

"It was rather of their taking than my giving. But Miss Faith,

— 'How necessary is it now-a-days,
That each body live uprightly in all manner ways?' "

"Yes, Mr. Linden! What are you thinking of?"

"Just that —" he said smiling. "A thought of the darkness makes one want to trim the lights. Did you ever notice, Miss Faith, that many things which were written in a mere worldly sense, will bear a very sweet Christian application? Take this for instance: —

'Thus would I double my life's fading space,
For he who runs it well, runs twice his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, that happy state,
I would not fear nor wish my fate,
But boldly say each night, —
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them; I have lived to-day.' "

She listened with a bright face at first; then as the quotation was ended her face flushed, she turned her eyes away, and a grave look of sorrow crept over her lips. But in a little while she looked again.

"How many books do you carry about in your head, Mr. Linden?"

"If I should tell you, Miss Faith, then you would know — and then I could never delude you any more! Now we must quicken our pace, or we shall scarce get our poem before tea."

For awhile the trotting was pretty brisk, then they drew bridle again and went gently on, but now towards the setting sun, whose bright rays were caught and held by the white sails that gleamed here and there in the distance. Now they met lines of cattle, driven by some bare-footed boy or sun-bonneted girl, and ploughmen trudged along the road behind their teams. Thicker curls of smoke from wayside chimneys spoke of supper, and where a house stood in the shadow of

some bit of forest, lights were already gleaming from the windows.

"How many things by season seasoned are
To their right praise, and true perfection!"

Which bit of excellent eulogy might also have been true of Quapaw creek and the bridge over it, which they reached in seasonable time. Quapaw creek was here a little bit of a river, and the bridge over it was an insignificant little bridge — 'no count,' in Squire Deacon's language. But now, of all times in the year, the little bridge was already full of more than it could hold, literally, for it couldn't hold what was upon it. A heavy farm-wagon loaded with some sort of produce had got fairly upon the bridge some hour or two before and then broken through; men and teams had for the present deserted it, and there was the way pretty effectually blocked up. What was to be done? They were not more now than a mile or two from home, but to go back and round by the nearest way would be several miles. The water was not very broad, nor generally deep; but the banks and the bed of the stream were uneven and strewn with rocks and stones, small and great. It was fordable, certainly; a good rider might cross well enough; but a good rider would scarce choose to trust an unskilful one there. What was to be done?

"We shall have to go back, Mr. Linden," said Faith; — "and you mustn't mind my riding fast now, or mother will be uneasy."

Mr. Linden took the case into consideration.

"Will you mind riding before me, Miss Faith?"

"What, sir?" she said, not understanding.

"Will you let me take you across?"

"How can you, Mr. Linden?" she said, looking a little startled, and flushing.

"Very easily — on my horse. Stay where you are a minute, and let me try the ford." And not waiting for an answer to that, he rode down the bank and into the stream. It was easy enough, for a man who knew what to do with his horse's mouth; not easy, nor perhaps safe for another. The

footing needed to be chosen by the hand of the rider; so chosen it was good. Mr. Linden rode to the other side and came back.

"Will you try, Miss Faith?"

"Yes," she said, putting her horse in motion, — "I am not afraid. I will follow you. It will be better than going round." But his horse did not stir.

"I shall not follow you, Miss Faith, — and yet if you cross it must be before me. No other way is safe for you."

"Well, we can go round, can't we?" said Faith.

"Yes," he said, — as the sun dropped down behind the low horizon, and the cool shade fell on everything but the tree tops. "You know it is about six times as far. Are you afraid of my horse?"

"No, not when you hold him. I will do just what you please, Mr. Linden," she said, though her colour mounted.

"Then do not be afraid of me," he said, dropping his own bridle and gently disengaging the hand from hers. "Please take your foot out of the stirrup, Miss Faith —" and the transfer was made in a moment: she was lifted across the little space between the two horses, and seated in front of Mr. Linden, and held fast.

"Are you afraid?" he repeated, looking gravely down at her.

"No sir. — Not a bit, Mr. Linden," she said, throwing a little more warmth into her words, for the first had been spoken somewhat under breath. So leaving the one horse fastened to a tree-branch, the other set forward with his unwonted burden, which indeed at first he did not much approve; pricking his ears, and sidling about, with some doubtfulness of intent. But being after all a sensible horse, and apprehending the voice and rein suggestions which were made to him, he began to pick his way slowly and carefully among the stones on the bank, and then through the stones in the river; setting down his feet with great judgment and precaution, and paying no heed to the rushing and splashing of the little stream, except by his ears — which certainly worked,

for once. And so the dangerous "pass" was soon behind them, and Mr. Linden dismounted and lifted Faith down, and seated her on a grey stone on the bank, while he went back for her horse. Which crossing, it may be observed, was accomplished much quicker than the last. The twilight was falling fast, and the little river, and the two horses as they forded its swift current, looked shadowy enough; set off by the white foam on both. The evening wind began its fitful stir, and swept the dry leaves past Faith's feet, and shook the cedar boughs above her head; and so she sat there, and watched the crossing.

"I have had the best picture to-day, Mr. Linden," she said, when she was placed in the saddle again. "You ought to have seen the river, and you and the two horses coming over it, in this light, as I did. You don't know how pretty it was. Now you'll let me ride fast, won't you? — for mother will be looking for us."

"As fast as you please — but after all, you have not seen *my* picture," he said smiling.

Faith profited by the permission given and put her horse to a pace that proved she was very much in earnest to prevent that "looking for them" on Mrs. Derrick's part. She got out of the trot into a canter — or her horse did — and then away they flew; too fast to see or be hindered by any more friends or foes; till they drew bridle at home.

It was too late to have the reading before tea. So to have tea as speedily as possible was the next object. And then they adjourned to the fire-lit sitting-room, where Faith lighted the lamp in uncertainty whether reading or studies was to be the next move. Mr. Linden, however, went for his book — a little old volume, of which Faith had never taken notice; and began, without doubt, the prettiest description of a garden that ever was written; —

> "How vainly men themselves amaze,
> To win the palm, the oak, or bays:" — etc.

The reader paused a moment, to tell more particularly what these leafy honours were, and then went on.

"Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude."

At which words precisely, the spirit of contrariety opened the door and ushered in Dr. Harrison. All *he* saw, was Mr. Linden with a book, in one easy-chair; Mrs. Derrick with her knitting in another; and a little further off, Faith, sitting on her low cushion and apparently doing nothing. Probably for that reason the doctor made up to her first. He sat down beside her, and enquired in a low tone how the fishes were? Faith answered that they were well; only one of them had been eaten up by the others.

"You are a little tired and are feeling remarkably well to-night," the doctor went on. "What have you been doing?"

"I have been trying to do my duty," Faith said colouring and laughing.

"Don't you always do that?" said Dr. Harrison looking at her enquiringly.

"But I didn't know what it was till to-day."

"You are doing what is very uncommon with you," said the doctor, — "fighting me with my own weapons." His smile was pleasant though acute; but Faith coloured exceedingly.

"I can't tell you exactly what duty I mean," she said, "but Mr. Linden can."

"Do you take your notions of duty from him?"

"To-day," — said Faith with a smile, sweet and with spirit enough too.

"I maintain that duties are facts, not notions," said Mr. Linden.

"Hum —" said the doctor turning, — "Now you are too quick for me. May one not have a *notion* of a fact?"

"One may. What are your notions about society and solitude?"

"Of duty in those regards?"

"Not at all, — your notions of those facts."

"Confused —" said the doctor, — "Incomprehensible — Melancholy — and Distracting!"

He had got up and assumed the position he seemed to like, a standing-place on the rug, from whence he could look down on everybody.

"What do you say to this? —

'Two paradises were in one,
To live in Paradise alone.' —

I suppose that meets your 'notions.'"

"No," said the doctor, — "not unless Eve were the paradise. And even then, I shouldn't want her any more to myself than to let all the world come and see that she was mine."

"It is a grave question," said Mr. Linden, "whether paradise becomes smaller by being divided. In other words, whether after sharing it with Eve, Adam still retained the whole of it for himself!"

"Just the other way!" said the doctor, — "it was doubled — or trebled. For in the first place he had Eve; she was a second paradise; — then all her enjoyment of paradise was *his* enjoyment; that was a third; — and in short I should think the multiplication might go on ad infinitum — like compound interest or any other series of happiness impossible to calculate."

"Simple interest isn't a bad thing," said Mr. Linden.

"Yes," said the doctor with an answering flash of his eye, "but it never contented anybody yet that could get it compound — that ever I heard of. Does Miss Derrick understand arithmetic?"

"Miss Derrick," said Mr. Linden, "how many angels can stand on the point of a (darning) needle without jostling each other?"

"Don't be deluded into thinking *that* is arithmetic," said the doctor. "Some of them would get their feet hurt. What duty has Mr. Linden been persuading you to do to-day?"

"Mr. Linden can tell," said Faith.

Which appeal Mr. Linden answered by deliberately finishing his poem aloud, for the benefit of the company.

"'What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine.
The nectarine, the curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach.
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.' . . . .

'Here, at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.'" etc.

The doctor listened, faithfully and enjoyingly; but his finishing comment was,

"What a pity it is November!"

"No," said Faith — "I think I enjoyed it better than I should in July."

"Rousseau's doctrine," said the doctor. "Or do you mean that you like the description better than the reality?"

"It was the reality I enjoyed," said Faith.

"What have you got there, Linden?"

"Various old poets, bound up together."

"What was that you read?"

"Andrew Marvell's 'Garden.'"

"It's a famous good thing! — though I confess my soul never 'glided into the boughs' of any tree when my body didn't go along. Apropos — Do you like to be on the back of a good horse?"

"Why yes," said Mr. Linden, "when circumstances place me there."

"Will you let me be a circumstance to do it? I have an

animal of that description — with almost the facility of motion possessed by Andrew Marvell's soul. Will you try him?"

"Can he run?" said Mr. Linden with comic demureness.

"Fleetly. Whether *away with you* depends, you know, on what I have no knowledge of; but I should think not."

"I should like to know beforehand —" said Mr. Linden in the same tone. "However — Is it to be on simple or compound interest, doctor?"

"I never take simple interest," said Dr. Harrison. "I want all I can get."

"Well if I take your horse, what will you ride alongside of me?"

"That is easily arranged," said the doctor smiling. "This fellow is a new-comer, comparatively, and a pet of mine. I want to know what you think of him. When is your next time of leisure?"

"My daylight leisure is pretty limited now. Part of Saturday I could take."

"Then you'll hold yourself engaged to me for Saturday morning, — and I'll hold myself engaged to give you something pleasant to do with it. The roads hereabout are good for nothing *but* riding — you can have the pleasure of motion, there isn't much to take your thoughts away from it."

"Except emotion?"

"If you're another Marvell of a man, and can send your soul into the boughs as you pass; — as good as stumbling on melons," said the doctor. "Unless your horse stumbles!"

"I see his character is coming out by degrees," said Mr. Linden smiling.

"He's as sure-footed — as you are! Here comes emotion — in the shape of my aunt Ellen. Isn't Mr. Linden a careful man?" he asked whimsically in a low voice, returning to his place by Faith. The question touched Faith's feeling of the ludicrous, and she only laughed at the doctor. Which he liked very well.

Mrs. Somers' errand was to invite the younger portion of the company to spend Christmas evening with her. And

having succeeded in her mission, she made the doctor take her home.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The week thereafter passed with the usual quiet business of those days. Friday evening, however, when the lamp was lit, instead of opening her books at once, Faith took the doctor's station on the rug.

"Dr. Harrison has been here this afternoon, Mr. Linden; and asked me to go with you and him in the ride to-morrow."

"Well, Miss Faith?"

"I was afraid at first that it might hinder the good of your ride, if I went; but Dr. Harrison said no; and he put it so that at last I said I would. But I am afraid of it still."

"How did he put it?"

"I don't know," said Faith half laughing; — "in a way that left me no excuse; as if he thought it would be more pleasure both to you and to him, to have me along."

"Miss Faith, if you go, you must give me leave to keep very near you. I trust my own care better than Dr. Harrison's. You will understand why I do it?" Faith did not understand very well.

"I supposed of course, Mr. Linden, you would be very near! I knew mother would not let me go to ride with Dr. Harrison, but with you I thought she would not be afraid."

He looked at her a little doubtfully — as if he wanted to say something; but whatever it might be, it was not what he did say, — a quiet

"I will try and take care of you, Miss Faith." Which words were afterwards enlarged upon.

"Miss Faith, may I trust that you will not fall behind my 'fleet' horse to-morrow?"

"Do you mean, if he goes very fast?" said Faith, with questioning eyes.

"His speed shall not put you to any inconvenience. In-

deed it may chance that he will be obliged to go slower than you like, — in which case, Miss Faith, I hope your liking will change."

The doctor came the next day in a gay mood.

"I told you," said he, "I shouldn't be content with simple interest — I wanted compound. I hope you approve of my addition to our plan?"

"So far so good," Mr. Linden said smiling.

They went out, and Mr. Linden's first move was towards the horse with the side saddle; not with the intention of mounting him, however: but a more particular, thorough, systematic examination of every buckle and strap of his harness, that particular horse had never had. Then Mr. Linden turned and held out his hand to Faith.

She gave him hers with a facile readiness that quite precluded interposition, and testified either that she had expected it or had *not* expected it; most probably the latter. Dr. Harrison bit his lips, but that was a second's emotion; his next step was to dismiss the groom who stood at the horse's head and take that office on himself.

"You are more careful than is absolutely necessary in this case," said he smiling. "This horse, Miss Faith, is the mate, I presume, of the one Job used to take his exercise upon. I chose him for you, thinking of Mrs. Derrick. — Give 'Stranger' to Mr. Linden!" — The last words being a direction to the groom.

A very different creature was Stranger! If it had been the purpose of Dr. Harrison to give his friend so much to do with his own particular affairs that he would have no leisure to bestow on those of other people, he had chosen the horse at least well. A very fine and beautiful animal, he deserved all the praise given him for facility of motion; no feet could disdain the ground more daintily; no carriage be more absolutely springy and soft. But the mischief and spirit of both the runaways combined would not match his case. He did not indeed appear to be vicious, any further than a most vehement desire to please himself and that in

all manner of eccentric ways, totally irrelevant to the purpose of getting ahead on the road or serving the will of his rider, might be called vice. It rather seemed the spirit of power in full play. However it were, there was no lack of either 'motion' or 'emotion' during the first half mile of the way; for Stranger's manner of getting over so much of the ground was continually either calling Faith's blood into her cheeks, or driving it out from them.

They were well matched, however, the horse and the rider, — and the spirit of power in equal exercise. Neither did Mr. Linden seem averse to the play — though Stranger presently found that what play *he* indulged in, was clearly matter of concession; his name, as regarded his rider, soon lost its point. On the whole, the performance came as near the 'Centaurship' declared impossible by Dr. Harrison, as most things have in modern times; but so far as the doctor had any stake depending upon Stranger's antics, so far he lost. Mr. Linden had never seemed more absolutely at leisure to attend to other people's affairs, and had rarely, it may be said, attended to them more thoroughly, than during that 'springy' half mile. An occasional Pas seul round the minuet of his companions, rather heightened the effect. On another score, too, perhaps the doctor lost; for whatever efforts he made, or *she* made, it was simply impossible for Faith to attend to anything else whatever with any show of consecutiveness, but the said horse and his rider. An attention sufficiently accounted for in the first place by the startled changes of colour in her face; latterly the colour rose and became steady, and a little varying play of smile on lip and eye during the third quarter of a mile attested the fact that other "emotions" had displaced that of fear. Clearly the doctor had lost upon Stranger.

"How do you like him?" he said at last speaking across Faith who was not "good" for conversation.

"Very much."

"I see you do — and he likes you, which is, to be sure, a correlative position. As I see he don't fill your hands, may

I impose upon you the care of my sister? We are an uneven number you are aware, and as I thought it desirable not to look *odd*, I gave her permission to go with us."

Dr. Harrison did not see — if Faith did — the tiniest bit of a glance that sought her face while he was speaking; but nothing could be easier than the terms in which Mr. Linden declared himself ready to take charge of any number of ladies, — it was only equalled by Stranger's bound the next minute.

How dismayed one of the party was at this addition of Miss Harrison's company, nobody guessed. They turned in at Judge Harrison's gate, and found Miss Sophy all ready for them. But to Faith, the play was suddenly taken out of "the play." She and Dr. Harrison set forward to be sure, over a pleasant road, in delicious weather; the doctor was in one of his balmiest moods; and though quietly, she was very well mounted. It was pleasant, or would have been pleasant; but all the while, what was Stranger doing behind her that she could not see! Then in answering some kindly, graceful remark of the doctor's, Faith chid herself for ungratefulness, and roused herself to give and take what good was in her power.

The ride was pleasant after that! The air in all its calm sweetness was well tasted; the barren landscape, never barren to Faith's eyes, was enjoyed at every step. Her horse went agreeably, and the talk between her and Dr. Harrison grew interesting and enlivening.

Meanwhile Mr. Linden's horse and his companion were at the antipodes — of each other. Thoroughly good and estimable as Miss Harrison was, she never left the beaten track, — and Stranger never kept in it. Between these two opposites Mr. Linden amused himself as best he might. To do him justice he tried his best to amuse his companion.

Several miles of way had been passed over, when in a broad grassy reach of the road, the two riders ahead fell back upon the rest of the party; Faith taking Miss Harrison's side, while the doctor drew up by Mr. Linden.

"How does it go?" he said good humouredly.

"What is the impersonal in this case?" said Mr. Linden, while Stranger snorted and bounded, and by every means in his power requested the doctor to keep at a distance.

"A conglomerate, for which I found no better term. You, Stranger, and my sister, and the world generally."

"Stranger is in a sufficiently ardent mood, for his share — he gives me a fine view of the country," said Mr. Linden, as the creature brought himself to a tolerably erect position, and seemed to like it so well as to be in no hurry to come down; and when he did, took the precaution to take his hind feet off the ground before the fore feet touched. "Miss Faith — how does this agree with your ideal of Melancholy?"

Faith forgot to answer, or thought answers impertinent.

"That horse frightens me out of my wits," said Miss Harrison. "I have been jumping out of the saddle half the time, since I came out. Sometimes he'll go very quietly — as nice as anybody — and then he'll play such a caper as he did then. That was just because Julius came up alongside of him. He had been going beautifully this last mile. I wish he'd have nothing to do with such a creature!"

"I suppose he's very pleasant to ride," said Faith eying the creature.

Perhaps Stranger — with his full, wild eyes, took note of this look of partial favour, for he backed a little from the doctor, and came dancing round by Faith, and there danced along at her side for a few minutes; evidently in an excited state of mind. His rider meanwhile, gave Faith a quiet word of admonition about keeping so loose a rein, and asked, in the same half undertone, if she felt tired?

"O no!" Faith said with a look of thanks and pleasure.

"That piece of care I must trust in your hands — don't forget that I *do* so trust it. How would you like to cross Quapaw creek on this piece of quicksilver?"

"I don't think you'd like to have me!" Faith said very decidedly. "I never saw anything so beautiful, quite, Mr. Linden — that I recollect at this minute," she added smiling.

"I want to dance with you to-day — more than I ever did before," he answered, smiling too. "Miss Faith, if you have not yet said the 'few sensible words,' or if you have any left, won't you please say them to me?"

"That question comes like a constable upon all my sense," said Faith laughing, "and it feels as I suppose a man does when he is clapped on the shoulder."

"But the man cannot run away, you know."

"Nor my sense don't," said Faith, — "that I know of, — but it feels as if it hadn't possession of itself, Mr. Linden."

"Well see if it is equal to this demand — What would be the consequences if you and I were to start off and scour the country 'on our own hook,' as people say?"

"I think our 'hook' would draw two people after us," said Faith, looking very much amused and a little afraid of being overheard.

"That is a melancholy fact! And my self-indulgence needs to be kept in check. Miss Faith," he said dropping his voice still more, "Stranger regrets very much that he must now go through that figure of the cotillion called 'Ladies change'!" And with a low and laughing bow, Mr. Linden reined back his horse and returned to his former place with all the soberness that circumstances allowed.

There was no soberness whatever in the face with which Faith recommenced her tête-à-tête with Miss Harrison. The doctor was perfectly in order.

"I have been thinking," he said, "since my question of how the world went with you, what a very insignificant thing, as to extent, '*the world*' of any one person is."

"Compared with the universe," said Mr. Linden.

"What sort of a world have you got into?" said Dr. Harrison somewhat impatiently. "No — the actual extent of your and my consciousness — of the field of action and perception which we magnificently call our world! What a mighty limited field it is!"

"I think you describe it correctly," said Mr. Linden: "it

is both mighty and limited. A little space railed off for every man — and yet larger than that man can ever fill."

"It seems to me too insignificant to be worth filling."

"There is a little outlet on every side that makes it impossible to fill!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, that while our action at every step touches other people, and their consequent action moves on with like effect, the limits of our power in this world can never be known."

"Will you think me impertinent if I ask once more what you mean? — or rather, ask you to enlarge a little?"

"If a man plants the first clover seed or thistle-down in some great continent," said Mr. Linden, "from whose little field is it, that in a hundred years the whole land bears thistles or clover?"

"It won't," said the doctor, "if a hundred other things are sown at the same time. And so it seems to me in life — that one action is counteracted by another, universally, — and nothing makes anything! — of any avail."

"If *nothing* is of any avail, things don't counteract each other. You are proving my position."

The doctor smiled, not unpleasantly.

"I see," he said, "you can maintain any position you choose to take, — on the ground or in the air! I must give way to you on *this* ground." And Dr. Harrison reined back his horse and came into Faith's neighbourhood.

"Miss Derrick, the road is getting too contracted for such a procession — will you draw bridle?"

"I don't want to ride behind, Dr. Harrison," said Faith looking laughingly back at him. "I'll go on in front." Which she did, so briskly that the doctor had to bestir himself to come up with her.

"I didn't know," he said, and he spoke somewhat in earnest, — "I didn't know that you cared anything about eminence or preëminence."

"Didn't you, Dr. Harrison?"

"*Do* you?"

"I don't know —" said Faith gravely. "Eminence? — yes, I should care very much for that, in some things. Not for preëminence, I think. There's Mr. Simlins! — and I must speak to him." Faith's horse which had been on an easy canter, came to a stand; and so must the doctor. Mr. Simlins too was on horseback.

"Mr. Simlins," said Faith after giving him her hand, "will you have half a day's leisure Monday or Tuesday?"

"Leisure?" said the farmer with his best growl, — "no, I sha'n't have it if you take it."

"Do you think I may take it?"

"I don't suppose there's anybody that can hinder you," said Mr. Simlins — "without excepting my own identity. *I* can't. Do you want to go up yonder again?"

The doctor interposed to make offers of his father's horses, carriage, and servants; but Faith quietly negatived them all.

"How did you get home the other night?" said the farmer. "Did you get over the river?" Then shifting his ground as Miss Harrison and Stranger came up into the group, he changed his question.

"I say Mr. Linden! — I heerd Quapaw creek was choked up the other night — how did you get home?"

"The same way I expect to now," said Mr. Linden. "How did *you*, Mr. Simlins."

"The harness was all right," said Mr. Simlins — "if anything else was in a disorganized state, 'twas somebody's fault besides yourn. That lynch-pin made trouble though; it didn't fit more places than one. Did you get across Quapaw creek on your horses?"

"Do you suppose I crossed on foot?" said Mr. Linden smiling. "Do you take me for a witch, Mr. Simlins?"

"I haven't just made up my mind about that," said the farmer. "I've a temptation to think you air. What's that you're on?"

"Only a broomstick in disguise, Mr. Simlins. As he belongs to Dr. Harrison, I am willing to own so much."

"He's as well-shaped a broomstick as ever I see," said the

farmer consideratively. "I shouldn't mind puttin' him in harness. Well good-day! I'm glad this girl didn't have to go all round again the other night — I was afeard she had. I'll take you over creation," he sung out after her as they parted company, — "and I'll be along Monday."

"Quapaw creek?" said Dr. Harrison, as the interrupted procession took up its line of march again, — "I think I remember that. What was the matter?"

"The bridge was broken, with a loaded wagon upon it," Faith explained.

"And you crossed by fording?"

"Yes."

"Isn't it rather a difficult ford? If I remember right, the bed of the stream is uneven and rough; doesn't it require some guiding of the horses?"

"I believe so — yes. It isn't safe for an ignorant rider."

"I didn't give you credit," said he looking at her, "for being such a horsewoman. That is quite a feat for a lady."

Faith coloured high. But she was not going a second time to fight the doctor "with his own weapons." A very little she hesitated, then she said boldly, though not in very bold tones it must be confessed, —

"I am not a horsewoman — Mr. Linden carried me over."

The doctor looked very moody for a few minutes; then his brow brightened. Faith's straightforward truth had served her as well as the most exquisite piece of involution. The doctor could not very well see the face with which her words were spoken and had to make up his mind upon them alone.

"It is so!" was his settled conclusion. "She has only a child's friendly liking for him — nothing more — or she never, simple as she is, would have said that to me with that frankness!"

Moodiness returned to the doctor's brow no more. He left Quapaw creek in the distance and talked of all manner of pleasant things. And so, with no second break of the order of march, they went on and went home.

"Mr. Linden," said Faith when she was lighting the lamp for study in the evening, — "you'll never ask anything of me so hard to do as that was to-day."

"Hard?" he replied. "Why?"

"To keep in front, where I could not see you and that horse."

"Miss Faith! I am very sorry! — But you know I had you in charge — I felt bound to keep you in sight."

"I know," — she said; and sat down to her work.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

There was no more riding after that — the weather grew too cold, and Mattabeeset was put off till spring; but with walks and talks and reading aloud, Göthe's maxim was well carried out. For there is music that needs no composer but Peace, and fireside groups that are not bad pictures in stormy weather. And so December began to check off its short days with busy fingers.

There came a sudden interruption to all this, except December's part of it. For a letter arrived from Miss Delia Danforth, at Pequot, begging that Faith would come and spend a little time with her. Miss Delia was very unwell, and suffering and alone, with the exception of her brother's French wife; and she wrote with longing desire to see Faith. Mr. Danforth had been some years dead, and the widow and the sister who had lived so long together with him, since his death had kept their old household life, in a very quiet way, without him. But now Miss Danforth longed for some of her own kindred, or had a special liking or desire for Faith's company, for she prayed her to come. And it was not a call that Faith herself a moment doubted about answering. Mrs. Derrick's willingness lingered, for various natural reasons; but that too followed. It was clear that Faith ought not to refuse.

The day before she was to go, Mrs. Derrick made herself unusually busy and tired, so as to spare Faith's study-time;

and thus it fell out, that when night came and prayers were over, Mrs. Derrick went straight to bed; partly from fatigue, partly to be ready for an early start next day; for she was to drive Faith over to Pequot. No such need or inducements sent Faith to bed; and the two students planned a longer evening of work than common, to anticipate lost time. But when the hours were about half spent, Cindy came to the door and called out, "Miss Faith!" — Faith left her book and went to the door, which she held open.

"There was a boy come to-night," said Cindy, "from that old starvation creatur down by Barley point, and he says she's more in a box than ever. Haint a crumb of bread for breakfast — nor supper neither, for that."

"Is the boy here now?"

"Why sakes no!" said Cindy. "He come while you was to supper. I s'pose I might ha' telled ye before, but then again I was busy bakin' cakes — and I'm free to confess I forgot. And prayers always does turn everything out of my head. I can't guess how I thought of it now. Mr. Skip's away to-night, too," said Cindy in conclusion. Faith shut the door behind her.

"It's too far for you to go alone. Can you find somebody to go with you, Cindy? I'll put up a basket of things for her."

"Aint a soul in sight —" said Cindy. "I'd as lieves go the hull way alone as to snoop round, hunting folks."

"Then Cindy, if you'll get ready I'll go with you. She must have something."

Cindy looked at her. "Guess you better get fixed first, Miss Faith. 'Taint hardly worth *my* while, I reckon. Who shouldn't we have after us!"

"Just have your shawl and bonnet ready, Cindy, will you?" said Faith gravely, — "and I'll be ready in a very few minutes."

She went with business speed to pantry and cellar, and soon had a sizeable basket properly filled. Leaving that in Cindy's charge, Faith went back to the sitting-room, and

came and stood by the table, and said quietly, "I can't do any more to-night, Mr. Linden. I must be busy in another way. I am going out for a little while."

"May I ask — not from curiosity — with whom?" he said looking up at her.

"With Cindy — to attend to some business she didn't tell me of in proper time." Faith had laid her books together and was going off. Mr. Linden rose from the table.

"With me, if you please, Miss Faith. I will not intrude upon your business.

"It's no business to be intruded upon!" she said with her simple look into his face. "But Cindy and I can do it. Please do not let me take you away! I am not afraid — much."

"Miss Faith, you want a great many lessons yet! — and I do not deserve this. Don't you know that in Mrs. Derrick's absence I am guardian of her house — and of you? I will go with you, or without you — just as you choose," he added smiling. "If you would rather study than walk, you shall. Is the business too intricate for me to manage?"

"It's only to carry some things to an old woman who is in great want of them. They can't wait till to-morrow. If you will go, Mr. Linden, — I'll be ready in a minute. I'd like to go."

She ran to get ready, and Mr. Linden went to the kitchen and took the basket from Cindy, and then waited at the front door till Faith came, and they went out into the moonlight together. A very bright moonlight, and dark shadows — dark and still; only one of them seemed to move; but that one made Faith glad of her change of companions. Perhaps it made the same suggestion to Mr. Linden, for his first words looked that way.

"Miss Faith, you did not do quite right, to-night. Don't you know —" with a gentle half smiling tone — "you must not let *anything* make you do wrong?"

Her look and tone were both very confiding, and touched with timidity.

"Did I, Mr. Linden? I didn't mean it."

"I know that — but you must remember for another time." And he went off to other subjects, giving her talk and information that were perhaps better than books. The walk was good, too; the air bracing, and the village sights and sounds in a subsiding glimmer and murmur. The evening out of doors was worth as much as the evening within doors could have been. Faith thought so. The way was down the road that led to Barley point, branching off from that. The distance to the poor cottage seemed short enough, but if it had seemed long Faith would have felt herself well paid — so much was the supply needed, so joyfully was it received. The basket was left there for Mr. Skip to bring home another time, and at a rather late hour in the evening the return walk began.

The night was sharp and frosty, and still, now, with a depth of silence. The moon, high and full, beamed down in silver splendour, and the face of the earth was all white or black. The cold, clear light, the sharp shadows angling and defining everything, the absolute stillness — how well they chimed! — and chime they did, albeit noiselessly. In that bracing air the very steps of the two homeward bound people seemed to spring more light and elastic, and gave little sound. They went on together with a quick even step, — the very walking was pleasant. For a while they talked busily too, — then Thought came in and claimed her place, and words ceased.

They had left the turn to the belt of woods, and were now passing one or two empty fields where low hedges made a black line of demarcation, and the moonlight seemed even whiter than before. Faith was on the side next the road, and both a little way out, for the walking was smoother and dryer.

How it was done Faith could not tell — the next two seconds seemed full of separate things which she remembered afterwards — but her hand was disengaged from Mr. Linden's arm, and he was standing before her and she be-

hind him, almost before she had fairly seen a little flash of red light from the hedge before them. A sharp report — a powdery taint on the sweet air, came then to give their evidence — to what?

That second past, Mr. Linden turned, but still standing so as to shield her, and laid both hands on her shoulders.

"Are you hurt?" he said, in a voice lowered by feeling, not intent.

One bewildered instant she stood mute — perhaps with no breath for words; the next minute, with a motion too unexpected and sudden to be hindered, lifting both hands she threw his off, bounded to one side to be clear of him, and sprang like a gazelle towards the spot where the red flash had caught her eye. But she was caught and stopped before she reached it, and held still — that same shield between her and the hedge.

"Did it touch you?" Mr. Linden repeated.

"No — Let me! let me!" — she said eagerly endeavouring to free herself.

He was silent a moment — a deep drawn breath the only reply; but he did not loose his hold.

"My dear child," he said, "you could find nothing — for what would you go?" — the tone was very gentle, even moved. "You must walk on before me as quick as you can. Will you promise to do it? I will keep you in sight."

"Before you? — no. What are you going to do? Are you touched?" — Her voice changed as she went on.

"I am not hurt — and mean to do nothing to-night but follow you home. But give me your promise, Miss Faith, — you must not stand here."

"Why in front? will they be behind us?"

"I must have you in sight — and I will not have you near me." And letting go his hold he said, almost imperatively,

"I will trust you. Walk on before me! — Miss Faith, you must not delay a moment."

"I will go with you," she said low, and clinging to his arm; — "Your safety is in being near me. I will not delay. Come!" —

But the hand was taken off again, and held in both his while he spoke.

"I will not have you anywhere near me! If you do not walk on far in front, I shall, — and keep watch of you as best I can." And he let go her hand, and stepped back with a quick pace that soon put some distance between them. She stood still a moment, looking, and then sprang back till she reached him; speaking with a low vehemence that did not seem like Faith.

"I will not do it, Mr. Linden — I will not! I will not! — Come, come! don't stay here!" —

Whatever Mr. Linden felt at that appeal — and he was not a man to feel it lightly — his words lost none of their firmness.

"I shall not stir until you are ten yards in front of me! — unless I leave you as far behind."

She planted herself for an instant before him and looked in his face, with eyes of quiet but most eloquent beseeching.

"No" — he repeated, — "you must go on and fear nothing. Child — 'there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few.'"

She did not answer, even by the little shake of the head which sometimes with her stood in place of words. She turned, went swiftly forward, with a straight, even, unslackening pace, which did not falter nor stop for a long, long piece of the way; *how* long it was by the mind's measurement it would be hard to tell. It was one breathless sense of pain and fear; of which moonlight and shadows and the points of the way all made part and were woven in together. Her ears were tingling for that sound; her eyes only measured unconsciously the distances and told off the waymarks. Down the little pitch of the road where that to Barleypoint forked off; then by a space of clear fences where hedgerows were not, and a barn or two rose up in the moonlight; through gates where the post sha-

dows were black and deep, by the skirting bushes that now and then gathered about the rails. She walked as fast as she could and keep her strength. That was unconsciously measured too. It had seemed to her, in her agony of pleading before the commencing of this strange walk, that it was *impossible* she should do it. She was doing it now, under a force of will that she had not been able to withstand; and her mind was subdued and strained beyond the power of thinking. Her very walking seemed to her mechanical; intensely alive as her senses were all the time. There was a transient relief at coming into the neighbourhood of a house, and a drear feeling of desolation and increased danger as she left it behind her; but her pace neither faltered nor flagged. She looked round sometimes, but never paused for that. Before the more thickly settled part of the village was reached her step grew a little slower, probably from the sheer necessity of failing strength; but steady it was, at whatever rate of travel. When at last they turned the sandy corner into the broad street or main way of the village, where houses and gardens often broke the range of hedgeway or fence, and lights spoke to lights in the the neighbouring windows, Faith stopped and stood leaning against the fence. In another moment she was drawn away from that to a better support.

"Are you faint?" Mr. Linden said.

Her "no" was faint, but the answer was true for all the rest of her.

He drew her hand within his arm, and went on silently; but how glad he was to see *her* home, Faith might guess from the way she was half carried up the steps and into the hall, and the door shut and locked behind her. After the same fashion she was taken into the sitting-room and placed in the easy chair, and her wrappers unfastened and taken off with very gentle and quick hands. She offered almost as little help as hindrance, and her head sank immediately.

He stood by her, and repeated his question about faintness.

"O no, sir — I'm not faint. It's nothing," Faith said, but as if her very voice was exhausted. And crossing her arms upon the table, close to which the easy chair stood, she laid her head down upon them. Her mother might well say she had a baby face. It looked so then.

Mr. Linden's next move was to get a glass of wine, and with gentle force and persuasion to make her swallow it; that done, he stood leaning upon the back of her chair, silently, bnt with a very, very grave face.

She kept her position, scarcely stirring, for some length of time, except that after a while she hid her face in her hands. And sitting so, at last she spoke, in a troubled tone.

"What can be done, Mr. Linden? — to put a stop to this."

"I will try what can be done," he answered, though not as if that point were uppermost in his mind. "I think I can find a way. I wish nothing gave me more uneasiness than that!"

"Do you think there is any way that you can do it, thoroughly?"

"Yes, I think so," he repeated. "There are ways of doing most things. I shall try. Do not you think about it, Miss Faith, — I have something now to make me glad you are going to Pequot. Before, I could only remember how much I should miss my scholar."

"Why are you glad now, Mr. Linden?" Faith's voice was in as subdued a state of mind as her face.

"Change of air will be good for you — till this air is in a better state."

She made no answer. In a few minutes she rose up, gathered her wrappers into one hand, and turning to Mr. Linden held out the other to him; with a very child's look, which however was rather doubtful about meeting his. His look had lost none of its grave concern.

"Are you better?" he said. "Will you promise to go right to sleep, and leave all troublesome matters where alone they can be taken care of?"

The faintest kind of a smile flitted across her face. "I

don't know" — she said doubtfully, — "I don't know what I can do, Mr. Linden."

"I have told you."

"I'll try — the last part," she said with a somewhat more defined smile as she glanced up at him. It was as grave and gentle a smile as is often known.

"You must try it all," he said, giving her hand the same touch it had had once before. "Miss Faith, I may use your words — I think you will never give me harder work to do than I have had to-night!"

She could not bear that. She stood with eyes cast down, and a fluttering quiver upon her lip; still, because the effort to control herself was at the moment as much as she could do. It was successful, though barely; and then, without venturing another look, she said her low "Goodnight, sir"; and moved away. She was accompanied as far as the door, but then Mr. Linden paused, with his hand on the latch.

"Shall you take any work — I mean *book* work — with you to Pequot? — or will your hands find too much else to do?"

"I meant to take some — I meant to do a good deal — I hope so."

"Then can you come back to the great chair for ten minutes, and let me give you a word or two of direction?"

She came immediately and sat down. And Mr. Linden went back to where they had been interrupted early in the evening, and told her what and where and how to go on in the various books, till she should see him again; putting marks here and there to save her trouble, or pencilling some explanation which might be needed. It took but a few minutes to do this; and then Mr. Linden laid the books together, and drawing the old Bible towards him once more, he turned to the ninety-first Psalm and read it aloud. Read it with full heart-felt effect; which made the words fall like the dew they are, upon the weary little flower Faith was. Then he bade her once more goodnight.

She went refreshed; yet to become a prey to struggling thoughts which for a while prevented refreshment from having

its lawful action. How much of the night and of the early morning Faith spent in these thoughts, and in the fruit of them, is uncertain; for the evening's work would sufficiently have accounted for her worn look the next day.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Must I go to Pequot?" was the first thought that entered Faith's mind the next morning. And the advancing daylight, with its clear steadfast way of looking at things, said, "Yes, you must." "Is there anything *I* — who know most about this business — can do to put an end to it?" That was a second thrilling question. The same daylight gave its frank answer, — "No, you cannot — you cannot." Faith took both answers, and then sought, in the very spirit of a child, to "leave all troublesome things where alone they could be taken care of."

"There is a faculty in this," saith Leighton, "that all persons have not." But the spirit of a child can do it; and the spirit of a Christian, so far as it is right, is none other. Faith went down stairs, in spite of inward sorrow and trembling, with a quiet brow. It was very much the face of last night, for its subdued look, and in spite of the night's rest, in its paleness too; though the colour played there somewhat fitfully. Sorrowful note of that Mr. Linden took, or the pained look of last night had not passed off from his face, — or both might be true. So far as the most gentle, quick-sighted, and careful attention could be of avail, the breakfast was pleasant; — otherwise it was but a grave affair. Even Mrs. Derrick looked from one to the other, with thoughtfulness that was not merely of Faith's going away.

There was little time however for observations. Directly after breakfast the wagon was got ready; and when they were bestowed in it and Mr. Linden's farewell had bade Faith remember all his injunctions the night before, he turned and walked on to his own place of work and the mother and daughter set forth on their journey.

In a small insignificant house, in a by street of Pequot,

was the little, very odd household of the two, Miss and Madame Danforth. They kept no servant; they lived quite to themselves; the various work of the household they shared between them and made it as good as play; and no worse than play seemed all the rest of their quiet lives. But Miss Dilly was ill now and unable to do her part; and what was worse, and more, she had lost her wonted cheerful and gay way of looking at things. That the little Frenchwoman never lost; but it takes two to keep up a shuttlecock, and Faith was welcome in that house.

What work she did there for the next two or three weeks was best known — not to herself — but to the two old ladies whose hearts she cheered. And they knew not all; they did not know the leap of Faith's heart at the thought of home, whenever, morning or noon or night, it came into her head. She kept it out of her head as much as she could.

And she went about from the top to the bottom of the house, even after the first day she came, the same sort of sunbeam she was at home. She took in hand Miss Danforth's broom and duster, and did Cindy's part of setting cups and saucers; but that was a small matter. The helpful hand which made itself so busy and the voice which ran music all up and down the house, were never forgotten, even by the Frenchwoman. To Miss Danforth, feeble and ailing, Faith ministered differently, and did truly the work of an angel. More than once before the second day was done, Miss Dilly repeated, "Faith, child, how glad I am I sent for you!" — And Madame Danforth took to her mightily; opened heart and arms without reservation; and delighting to have her company, carried her down into the kitchen and initiated Faith into deep mysteries of the science and art the head quarters of which are there. Now did Faith learn new secrets about coffee, about eggs, about salads and about vegetables, that she never knew before; and for some unknown reason she was keen to learn, and liked the half hours over the kitchen fire with Madame Danforth so well, that the little Frenchwoman grew proud of her pupil.

It was the third day of Faith's being at Pequot. Faith was engaged in some gentle offices about the room, folding up clothes and putting drawers in order. Miss Danforth's eye watched her, following every movement, till Madame Danforth left the room to go out on business. Faith was summoned then to her aunt's side. It was the darkening part of the afternoon. Faith sat down at the foot of Miss Danforth's great easy chair, looked into the fire, and wondered what they were doing at Pattaquasset.

"And so, Faith, child, you're taken to new ways, I hear."

To Faith's quick ear, Miss Danforth's voice shewed a purpose. It was less brisk than its old wont. Her answer was as simple as possible. "Yes, aunt Dilly. It's true."

"You don't think you're any better than you used to be — do you?"

"No, ma'am. Yet my life is better, I hope."

"I don't believe it! How could it be?"

"In this at least, that I am the servant of God now. Before, I never thought of serving him."

"I never did," said Miss Dilly. "But" —

There was a silence. Faith's heart leapt to hear this confession, but she said nothing and sat still as a mouse.

"How's Mr. Linden getting on in Pattaquasset?"

"Well."

"You like him as well as ever?"

"Yes."

Alert questions. Rather faint answers.

"Do you remember what he said one night, about everybody being precious? Do you remember it, Faith?"

"Yes, ma'am — very well."

"I suppose I have thought of it five hundred and fifty times," Miss Dilly went on. "What were the words, Faith? do you know 'em?"

Faith did not move, only repeated, and if they had been literal diamonds every word would not have seemed so precious to her, —

"'*They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels.*'"

"That's it!" said Miss Dilly. "Now go on, can you, Faith, and tell me what it means."

"It is spoken of the people that fear the Lord, aunt Dilly — it goes on —

"'*And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*'"

"Tell me more, Faith," said Miss Danforth presently in a subdued voice. "I don't understand one thing about it from beginning to end."

In answer to which Faith turned, took a Bible, and as one did of old, preached unto her Jesus. It was very simple preaching. Faith told her aunt the story even very much as she had told it to Johnny Fax; and with the same sweet grave face and winning tongue which had drawn the children. As earnest as they, Miss Dilly listened and looked, and brought her strong sense to bear upon the words. Not with the same ease of understanding. She said little, excepting to bid Faith 'go on,' — in a tone that told the quest she was upon — unsatisfied yet.

Faith went on, but preferred to let the Bible words speak instead of her own. It brought Mrs. Custers to mind again, though this time Faith's joy of heart made her words ring as from a sweet silver trumpet. So they fell on the sick woman's ear; nor was there stay or interruption till Faith heard the hall door close below. She shut the book then; then her arm came round Miss Danforth's neck, and her kisses spoke well enough the glad sympathy and encouragement Faith spoke in no other way. One earnest return answered her.

From that time, to read the Bible to her aunt was Faith's work; morning, noon, and night, literally; sometimes far into the night. For Miss Danforth, embracing what she had never known before, as the light gradually broke upon her; and feeling that her time for study might be made short, was in eager haste and longing to acquaint herself with the broad field of duties and privileges, all new, now laid open before her. Faith could not read too much; Miss Dilly could not listen too long.

"Faith, child," she said one night, late, when they were alone, — "can't you pray for me?"

"I do, aunt Dilly."

"No, no! but I mean, can't you pray *with* me? — now, here. Can't you, Faith?"

Faith kissed her; hid her face in her hands and trembled; and then knelt and prayed. And many a time after that.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Saturday before Christmas, which was moreover the day but one before, Squire Stoutenburgh went over to Pequot; and having checked off his business items, drove straight to Madame Danforth's. The door was opened to him by the Frenchwoman, who took him into a little room very like herself, and left him; and in another minute or two Faith came in. Her exclamation was with the unmistakeable tone and look of pleasure.

"My dear, I am very glad to see you!" was part of the warm reply. "How do you do?"

"I do very well, sir."

"Ah!" — said the Squire, — "I suppose so. Well I'll give you a chance to do better. My dear, I'm going to carry you off, — you're wanted."

"Am I?" said Faith with a quick change. "There's nothing the matter?"

"Nothing *bad*," said the Squire. "At least I hope not! Will you go home with me this afternoon?"

"O yes, sir — and very glad! But did mother send for me?"

"Sent for you if I could get you, Miss Faith. I don't suppose she'll ever really interfere with your doings — if you choose to go and live in the Moon, but she's half sick for the sight of you. That's prevalent just now," said the Squire, "and she's not the worst case. The doctor went off for fear he should take it; — but some people have duties, you know, and can't stir."

There was a tiny peachblossom tinge on Faith's cheek, which the Squire was pleased to take note of. She stood with a thoughtful face the while.

"I'll be ready, Mr. Stoutenburgh. When will you come for me?"

The time was fixed, and Faith made her explanations to her friends; promising that if need were she would come back again, or her mother, after Christmas. Miss Dilly let her go very willingly, yet most unwillingly; and Madame Danforth's reluctance had nothing to balance it. So it was that Faith's joy had its wonted mixture of gravity when she met the Squire again.

"If you're not going to be glad to get home, I'm a rich man if I'll go in with you!" he said as he put her in the sleigh and

tucked her up with shawls and buffalo 'robes. "That's the way! — first get power and then abuse it."

"Power! Mr. Stoutenburgh. What do you mean? I am very glad to go home. Don't I look so?" She certainly did.

"I mean that I haven't seen anybody smile since you went away," said Mr. Stoutenburgh, proceeding to tuck himself up in like manner. "Except Dr. Harrison. He kept himself in practice while he staid."

Faith was silent; eying the snowy road and the jingling horse heads, with a bounding feeling of heart that she was going home. She dared allow it to herself now.

"What do you guess made the doctor leave that fly-away horse of his for Mr. Linden to tame?" said the Squire. "Has he any particular reason for wishing to break his neck?"

"Did he do that?"

"Break his neck? — why no, not yet, — I suppose the doctor lives in hopes. You take it coolly, Miss Faith! upon my word."

"Mr. Stoutenburgh! — I meant, did he leave the horse for him. Dr. Harrison knew there wasn't much danger, Mr. Stoutenburgh."

Mr. Stoutenburgh touched up his own team.

"I guess!" — he said slowly, the doctor don't just know how much danger there is. So Pattaquasset 'll have a chance to come down on both feet — which that horse don't do often. We've had all sorts of goings on, Miss Faith."

"Have you, sir?" The question was put quietly enough, but there was a little tinge of curiosity, too.

"Yes," said the Squire, shaking his whip. "Sam Deacon's gone away and Mr. Linden's grown unpopular. Aint that news?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"'Why Sam Deacon's gone away —" the Squire repeated coolly. "He was getting rather too much of a sportin' character for our town, so a friend of mine that was going to Egypt — or somewhere — took him along. You needn't be uneasy about him — Miss Faith, he'll be taken care of. I should have sent him a worse journey, only I was overruled."

"And is he gone to Egypt?" said Faith.

"Hardly got so far yet," said the Squire. "But I thought it would be good for Sam's health — he's been a little weaker than usual about the head lately."

"That was only half of your news, Mr. Stoutenburgh," Faith said after another interval of musing.

"'Tother half's nothing wonderful. Mr. Linden's getting unpopular with everybody in town that he don't make up to on the right side; and as there's a good many of them, I'm afraid it'll spread. I've done *my* best to tell him how to quiet the matter, but you might just as well tell a pepperidge which way to grow! Did you ever try to make him do anything?" said the Squire, facing round upon Faith.

The startling of Faith's eyes was like a flash; and something so her colour went and came. The answer was a very orderly, "Yes, sir."

"Hum — I s'pose he did it, — guess I'll come to you next time I want anything done. Are you cold, my dear?" said the Squire renewing his efforts at wrapping up.

Faith's desire for Pattaquasset news was satisfied. She manifested no more curiosity about anything; and so far as appeared in words, was contented with her own thoughts. That however would have been a rash conclusion. For thoughts do occupy that do not content; and Faith could willingly have spared the hints in Mr. Stoutenburgh's last speech — and indeed in several others. She by no means understood them thoroughly; yet something of the drift and air of them she did feel, and felt as unnecessary. There had been already in Faith's mind a doubtful look towards the last evening she had spent in Pattaquasset; a certain undefined consciousness that her action that night might have said or seemed to say — she knew not what. She could find no fault with it, to herself; there had been nothing that she could help; but yet this consciousness made her more tender upon anything that touched the subject. She had thought of it, and put it out of her head, several times in these last weeks; and now Mr. Stoutenburgh's words had just the effect to make her shy. Faith's mind however had been full of grave and sweet things of late, and was in such a state now. The principal feeling, which the Squire's words could not change, was of very deep and joyous happiness; she was exceeding glad to go home; but at the same time in a mood too quiet and sober for the wine of joy to get into her head.

Squire Stoutenburgh too seemed satisfied, — perhaps with the uncold hue of Faith's cheeks; and now drove on at a rapid rate, talking only of indifferent matters. The horses

trotted quick over the smooth snow, and the gathering lead colour overhead was touched with gleams of light here and there, as the sun went down behind the Pattaquasset outlines. Swiftly they jingled along, crossing the ferry and mounting the hill; past trees and barns and village houses — then into the main street: down which the horses flew with a will, thinking of oats and their good stable, and unwillingly reined in at Mrs. Derrick's door.

It was dark by that time — Faith could see little but the lights glimmering in the windows, and indeed had no time to see much; so suddenly and softly was she lifted out of the sleigh the moment it stopped. Then Mr. Linden's voice said,

"Thank you, Mr. Stoutenburgh!"

"That's one way of thanking me!" said the Squire. "However — I suppose it's all right," — and gave his impatient horses their way.

"Why Mr. Linden," said Faith half laughing, but with a little of the old timidity in her voice, — "how could you see me before I saw you?"

"For various reasons, Miss Faith. How do you do?" He led her on, into the house and into the tea-room, there to delight her mother's heart and make her mother's eyes overflow.

"Pretty child!" Mrs. Derrick said, — "I never will let you go away again for anybody!"

Faith laughed, and kissed her and kissed her; but did not take that moment to say what she thought — that Mrs. Derrick would have to let her go again in a few days perhaps, and for Miss Danforth herself. Then her eye glanced at the tea-table, as it might at an ungoverned kingdom — or a vacated sphere; and the fulness of her heart broke out.

"Mother! — I'm glad to be home again!" The tone said it yet more than the words. And then with a sudden movement, she went off a step to Mr. Linden and held out her hand to him, albeit ever so little shyly. The hand was taken and kept, his eyes taking a quiet survey of her the while.

"Miss Faith, you want to be set to work! Some people will neglect themselves if they have a chance."

"I haven't done much work since I have been away, Mr. Linden."

He smiled — what was he reading in her face? "You don't know what you have done, child," he said. "But she looks glad, Mrs. Derrick, — and we are very glad to have

her." Whereupon Faith was conducted to the tea-table without more delay; Mrs. Derrick feeling sure that she was starving both with cold and hunger.

Faith had no appearance of being cold; and though she certainly did eat her supper as if she was glad to be at home, it was not with the air of a person with whom his bread and butter is the first thought. Gladness shone in every look and movement; but at the same time over all the gladness there was a slight veil; it might be gravity, but it might *not* be all gravity, for part of it was very like constraint; the eyes were more ready to fall than to rise; and the words, though free to come, had a great facility for running in short sentences. But Mrs. Derrick was too happy to notice such light streaks of mist in the sunshine, and talked away at a most unusual rate, — telling Faith how Mr. Linden had ridden that 'wild horse,' and had found time to teach her little class, and in general had done everything else — for everything seemed to hinge upon him. Mr. Linden himself — with now and then a word to qualify, or to make Faith laugh, took a somewhat special and quiet care of her and her wants at the table; all which seemed to Faith (in her mood) very like little gentle suggestions *at* that veil; — otherwise, he was rather silent.

Then followed prayers, with all the sweet warm influences of the time; and then Faith might sit and talk or be silent, as she liked; rest being considered the best work for that evening. It would seem that she liked to be silent, — if that were a fair conclusion from her silence. Her eye took happy note of the familiar things in and about the room; then she sat and looked into the fireplace, as glad to see it again maybe, — or doubtful about looking elsewhere. As silently, for a few minutes, Mr. Linden took note of her: then he spoke.

"Miss Faith, will you let me give you lessons all through the holidays?"

She gave him a swift blushing glance and smile. "If you like to do it, Mr. Linden — and if I am here."

"Where do you find those two 'ifs'?"

"I thought, perhaps, when I came away from Pequot today, that I might go back again after Monday. I am afraid aunt Dilly will want me."

"How much must people want you, to gain a hearing?"

"There are different kinds of wanting," Faith said gravely. "Aunt Dilly may miss me too much."

"And the abstract 'too much,' is different from the comparative. What about that other 'if'?"

"'The other if'? — I don't know that there is anything about it, Mr. Linden," Faith said laughing.

"Whence did it come? — before it 'trickeled,' as Bunyan says, to your tongue?"

"I don't know, sir!" —

"Miss Faith! — I did not think you would so forget me in three weeks. Do you want to hear the story of a very cold, icy little brook?" he said, with a sort of amused demureness that gave her the benefit of all his adjectives. She looked up at him with earnest eyes not all amused, but that verged on being hurt; and it was with a sort of fear of what the real answer might be, that she asked what he meant.

"Miss Faith, I mean nothing very bad," he said with a full smile at her then. "When I really think you are building yourself an ice palace, I shall spend my efforts upon thawing, not talking. What have you been doing all these weeks?"

With a little bit of answering smile she said, in a deliberate kind of way, — "I have been running about house — and learning how to cook French cookery, Mr. Linden — and most of all, I've been reading the Bible. I haven't had time to do much else."

"Do you know," Mr. Linden said as he watched her, "that is just what I thought? — And so you have been going step by step 'up the mountain'! Do you see how the road improves? — do you find the 'richer pastures' and the purer air?"

"O sir," said Faith looking up at him, — "I was reading to aunt Dilly."

"I know, — I understood that. Are not my words true still?"

Gravity and shyness, all except the gravity that belonged to her and to the subject, broke away from Faith. She rose up and stood beside Mr. Linden, moved, happy, and glad with the gladness of full sympathy.

"It has been a pleasant two weeks, Mr. Linden! — though I would have liked to be at home. Aunt Dilly has wanted the Bible, morning, noon, and night; — and it was wonderful to read it to her! It has been my business, all these days."

"My dear child! I am very glad!" he said, taking her hand. "Wonderful? — yes, it is wonderful to read, to one who wants it."

"She wanted it so much," — Faith said, catching her breath a little. "And understood it, Mr. Linden. Very soon it was all

— or mostly — clear to her. I read to her sometimes till twelve o'clock at night — and sometimes began at four in the morning."

Mr. Linden looked at her with a mingling of expressions.

"I am afraid that was not good for you, — if one dare say it of any work done in that service. Do you know how much the Bible is like that pillar of fire which guided the Israelites, but to those who were not of Israel became a pillar of cloud, — from which 'the Lord looked out' but 'to trouble them'?"

Faith's eye watched him as he spoke, and caught the power and beauty of the illustration; but she did not speak. Until after thinking and musing a while she said softly, "It don't trouble aunt Dilly."

Mr. Linden drew up a chair for her near his own, but made no other comment upon her or her musings at first, — then abruptly — "And you think she will want you again?"

"There is nobody else to do this for her," said Faith; and again was silent. "How do you suppose it all began with aunt Dilly, Mr. Linden?"

"As to means? — I cannot tell."

"It began from a few words, which I dare say you have forgotten, but which she and I remember, — words that you said one evening when she was here last summer, about everybody's being precious in one sense. — You repeated that passage — 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord,' — you know."

Faith did not know what a soft illumination was in her eyes, or she would probably not have turned the light of it so full upon Mr. Linden as at one or two points of her speech she did. It was a grave, sweet look that answered her; but then his eyes went off to the fire without further reply.

Faith did not again interrupt the silence; a silence that to judge by the faces of both was pleasant to both. Till Mrs. Derrick came in, who indeed could not be very long absent. Then Faith left her place, sat down on a low seat by her mother and caressingly took possesion of her hands and arms. She made no more startling propositions that night of going back to Pequot again; and the minutes of the evening flowed on — as such minutes do.

The Sunday which followed was one as quietly happy as is often known in this world. And the next day was Christmas.

END OF VOL. I.

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